ACROSS SIBERIA ALONE

"Out of your cage!
Come out of your cage
And take your soul
On a pilgrimage!"

Josephine Preston Peabody

Across Siberia Alone

An American Woman's Adventures

By

Mrs. John Clarence Lee

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FOREWORD

Days come and days go, but some sunny morning most of us wake up filled with a desire to serve, to help. It was on such a morning that this book was begun.

Siberia's need is that America should know her better. To that end, I have kept strictly to the facts as I saw them.

The list of persons, official and private, in Siberia and in Russia proper, to whom thanks are due, both for information and for verification of details, is too long to place here; but my heartfelt thanks must be put down.

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Philadelphia, Pa., U. S. A.

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ness of the day began. Is any other toilet like that of a bride? Each dainty garment is carefully put on and smoothed and patted. There was no need for hurry.

A succession of "chits" were brought by the Chinese boys. The Palace Hotel has no women servants. Our Number One boy is a tall, lithe fellow, with silent footfall. He wears a light-blue, long coat, which comes within ten inches of the floor. His black trousers are bound about the ankles. No servant must be permitted to come into your presence with his ankles unbound. It is a mark of disrespect.

"Chits" are a Chinese custom. They are notes. Labor is cheap. If you have a thought or want to ask a question, you don't telephone, although there are telephones,—you send a "chit." Many of the chits came in a sort of leather portfolio, bearing the owner's name on the outside, while on the inside a strong rubber band secured the chit.

Everybody connected with the navy, in Shanghai, offered to do anything he or she could. There was so little to do. Breakfast one must eat one's self and Caroline made a pretense of

it, huddled up in her lavender negligée, her pretty gold hair in place. There was a knock. The Ensign bridegroom was below. Breakfast — who wanted breakfast? She was hurried into a gown and went skipping down the corridor to meet the one man in the world.

Noon comes hard on the heels of morning. It found Caroline standing at the window, looking like an angel in her filmy white dress, with her hair shining through the veil and framing her fair face. After indecision and doubt and perplexity, her way of life was to be settled this day.

There were groups of Chinese boys dusting every inch of the corridor. An American bride doesn't pass through Shanghai every day. The procession below was waiting for us. The lobby was full — the sidewalk was lined.

In a minute we were in the automobile, whizzing along the Bund, over Bubbling Well Road, to the right through the Chinese quarter. The horn sounded constantly. The Chinese custom of walking in the street is not convenient for chauffeurs. We barely miss a wheelbarrow, as a one-wheeled chariot is called.

This wheelbarrow is very different from a European one. There is no box-like portion. It has simply one wheel in the center. On either side of the wheel is a seat, made of rails. A cord runs parallel to the seat, near the ground, and the passengers rest their feet on it.

Four laughing Chinese women, of the lower class, were sitting on one side of the wheel, while their bundles, on the other, balanced their weight. The wheelbarrow man was tugging at the handles, and a strap across his shoulders helped him to lift the burden. Chinese children darted this way and that, rickshaws sped along, but in spite of everything we made our fortunate way without disaster.

St. John's cathedral is on the outskirts of the town, in the same compound with the theological school and the mission building. As we entered the gate, the lawn lay before us refreshingly green. It was a quiet place. The bustle of the street was left behind. We slid silently along the drive toward the church.

A group of officers waited at the door. I tucked a few stray hairs under Caroline's veil and kissed her sweet face.

Buriat "head-man"

She turned to the Ensign.

We were hardly in our pew when the organ sounded. They came up the aisle. The Bishop, to whom a wedding was no novelty, waited patiently.

"Wilt thou take this woman — to have and to hold — from this day forward — in sickness and in health — to love and to cherish?"

The solemn words were nearly said, when the Bishop looked up.

"Who giveth this woman to be married?"

Powers above! And it had been expressly stipulated that this sentence was to be left out. He had forgotten.

Who did? Why, I, of course, her guardian; and from the pew I answered with such sang froid as I could muster.

He was praying now. I did not follow the words. I could only say, "God keep them. God keep them."

It was over. The Lohengrin Chorus chased away the sadness that every wedding brings. We were in the vestry, signing the register.

At the wedding breakfast, they drank the bride's health, the bridegroom's, mine, the ab-

sent friends' and everybody's. It was very gay. We were all Americans, and the hour seemed near and intimate.

CHAPTER II

SHANGHAI

IT is no part of my purpose to describe Shanghai. Older and better brains have tried to solve the Chinese puzzle. If I can give you one glimpse of the fascinating Orient, it is enough.

The windows of this room in the Palace Hotel open on a busy street. It is a holiday, and that makes a bit of a difference, even in this colorful city.

The Chinese have black hair and black, bead-like eyes, with close-shutting lids. The hair is long and coarse. Since the Manchu conquest, all the hair in front of an imaginary line, extending from one ear to the other, is shaved off. This was done as a sign of subjugation, and the shaving is practised only on men. In Shanghai, the majority of the men were still wearing queues. The women are allowed to wear whatever hair nature bestows upon them. They give it great care. It is plastered down with a gum,

made by soaking the shavings of a certain tree in water. When ladies are travelling with their maids, half of the amah's bright box is taken up with the queer tin receptacle that contains this mixture. It has a slight odor.

Straight beneath my window, a rickshaw is passing. You know a rickshaw as well as I, when you see it, but oh! my friend, you never saw so many. This rickshaw is nearly past. The coolie has on a queer, platter-shaped hat, not large. The little mud-guards of the wheels are green and—"marvellous eye!"—as the Chinese say, the European man who rides is wearing a new green felt hat.

A poor Chinese woman, with trousers that look like old overalls and a dull blue cloth coat, has four great bundles in her hands. Her feet are normal size but they look large, and she has done her feminine best toward minimizing the defect by wearing blue stockings with her black cloth shoes. Most Chinese women wear trousers of black or dark color and a coat of a warmer bright silk, often damask, coming half-way to the knees. Mrs. K.'s amah is usually arrayed in a purple silk coat. They wear white cotton stockings and

black cloth or satin slippers, very soft and pliable, with felt soles. Even the women who are maids have bound feet. It is only the extreme lowest class whose feet have not been bound.

A trolley line passes my window and there are an open and a closed car coupled together. Rickshaws have been passing all the while, but just now there are five in a row, and I'm guessing that a Chinese family is headed country-ward. A laundry boy has a long pole hung over his shoulder and a huge bunch of soiled linen attached to each end. Each package is done up in a clean white cloth. The boy himself is small.

These silks! These silks! "A more better" man, in his holiday attire, has a gray damask long coat, reaching to his heels, and a short, black brocade waistcoat. Waistcoats are worn outside the coat.

Now there are two motors. In the whole city one can hire three automobiles. We had them yesterday,— but that's another story. A father, with bright blue long coat and a pigtail, is leading his small son by the hand. The boy is clothed exactly like the father and they both have shaven heads. Three men with white cot-

ton long coats and odd little sleeveless vests are walking abreast. Two English ladies with drooping hats, their thin skirts blown by the wind and their pleasant, long bodies bent back, wait for a rickshaw to pass. A rather fat Chinaman is in the rickshaw; and when one is fat in China it means that he is prosperous. He bends his head as far as his neck will permit, and he views the English women. His eyes smile. His expression does not change. He does not "lose face,"— that ultimate dread of a Chinaman.

A side street opens twenty feet to the left of this corner. In the rooms above the business house live some Europeans. The windows are full of flowers. There is a woman's head there now. The face is turned toward the harbor and the woman waits. Shanghai is not a woman's paradise.

This slouchy Chinaman who is crossing the street has on a dirty straw hat. He must have come from America. A wave of cap enthusiasm swept the native hats off the coolies' heads a year ago and the English cap became the general garb.

Luncheons and dinners and teas,— and teas

and dinners and luncheons. The European world eats a good deal, and incidentally drinks a good deal in China,— especially in Shanghai. I stole every opportunity to walk along the Bund. There were many sampans anchored there.

We stood for a long while on the bridge at the end of the Bund. It was six o'clock and quite time that any self-respecting sampan owner should be regaling himself with food. But where is it to come from when one takes a cargo a day's journey for twenty cents? There were children climbing about, and in three out of the ten sampans a mother was sitting in the stern of the boat, nursing a baby. The primitive needs of life are very present and are *sans gêne*.

Two children came running across the mud. The girl was the older and she was carrying a flat, brown basket, which clinked against her bare brown legs. She had on the remains of some cotton trousers,— three inches of leg and a flapping seat, and a patched brown shirt. The boy's work was finished. Manlike, he had hunted for food and now he rested. The girl took the basket and planked it down in the dirty, shallow water. The persimmons and green bananas had a tend-

ency to float. She put her bare foot into the basket and, holding the food down with her foot, leisurely soused it up and down with both hands. Then she flung it into the boat and climbed up the side like a young cat.

Three boats away, there was a girl ten or twelve years old, keeping a straddling balance between two boats. Her hair was long and very black and showed well against the faded scarlet of her shirt. Her happy eyes saw the other children, saw us and looked beyond. She was playing with the muddy water, and she swayed with its lapping swish and laughed out loud.

The mother finished nursing her baby. The sun was just behind the buildings. A queer, rose-pink cloud, which seemed to be China-dyed, crept along the edge of a roof. The lavish color of a radiant sunset blest every spot of earth within the eyes' reach. The playing child looked up. Quickly and with a splash she jumped, standing in the water, and faced towards the sun.

CHAPTER III

THE CALL OF THE EAST

EVER since I was a child, I have heard that the call of the East is a call never to be passed by. The reasons for it grow from hour to hour. I know one insistent note of the call. It is the shimmering, scintillating sunsets. There was one tonight.

In the park, a Chinese band with an English leader played scurrilous airs, while amahs, mothers and children played and walked. Many men with sticks walked also.

There is a class of women, which is prominent here. They are everywhere, and it is useless to turn aside. They are clad in changeable taffeta, with much Irish lace, or in immaculate white, which does not spot, even when they step in the mud.

The Chinese amah is a faithful soul. I feel suspicions of her absolute cleanliness creeping into my mind. The Chinese are good to chil-

dren. One often sees the men carrying children, and the little faces smile. I hear that the missionaries are asked to be especially kind to children in the street, for that is the sure way to win the regard of the Chinese. It is not hard; the babies are such cunning imps.

The Chinese band is playing to a larger number of Englishmen than Chinamen. It seems at times as if this city was run principally for Europeans, especially for Englishmen. The Chinaman steps off the sidewalk for the Englishman, and the Chinese woman squeezes herself against the wall of the house to allow her European sister to pass.

I was a good deal surprised to find so large a number of tall Chinamen. Indeed, the majority here are tall and slim. This effect is accentuated by their long coats, which come well down to their ankles. The women, almost without exception, are short and slender. Their hair is dressed in a flat knot at the back of the head, and no chance lock escapes. I have not yet seen any Chinese women wearing hats.

Saturday night, two of the Admiral's aides took us to the theater. Through the week, I'd been hearing much talk of this theater. The

attraction was in town for two weeks, playing such lurid things as "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," "Salome," and the like. We drew a revised, unabridged and expanded version of "Baby Mine," played by a set of people who were advertised as actors. Perhaps they were. One evening's performance is hardly proof. On Sunday, we saw the real, live hero, walking through the hotel lobby and playing the part of the self-conscious, would-be gentleman better than he had done anything on the stage.

The audience liked the performance. A continued residence in China takes the edge off one's critical powers. There were a great many sailors, a few gorgeously dressed ladies, and the rest of the audience was composed of flush-faced, middle-aged men, presumably business men, of one kind or another.

Apropos of business, in China there seems to be some difference of opinion. Everybody agrees that people work hard. An insurance man said:

"I get up at eight-thirty. My boy has my bath ready — and a whisky. He shaves me and I get into my clothes. The boy brings my breakfast and gives me my hat and stick. I go down to the

office, the boy brings my mail, and I work until eleven. Then my boy brings another whisky and I go over to the Club. Stay there until one. The boy brings a cocktail and I go home for tiffin. Get back to the office at two-thirty and work until four. My boy brings another whisky and my racquet and I go out to the Burlington for tennis. Play until seven. The boy brings a cocktail and I go home for dinner. In the evening I go out with my wife. Come home, have a cocktail, and tell the boy to close my eyes."

One of the calls of the East is "Boy!" No one raises his finger,— the omnipresent boy raises it for him. The boy exists in such numbers that it gets to be second nature to depend on him for all the little services that in another country you would perform for yourself.

Mrs. K.'s amah took us into training. She tried to impress upon us that we must not say "Thank you" to the boys.

"No talkee tank," she said. "You laddy. No talkee tank. Maskee."

"Maskee" is the word that you hear everywhere. They were passing through a cholera epidemic in Shanghai, but people hesitated to

deprive themselves of the luscious fruit, especially the favorite pomelo. "Maskee!" and they ate it. It is the "No matter!" of the fatalist. If cholera is coming, it will come. "Maskee!"

CHAPTER IV

THE FINGER OF FATE

THE question concerned Siberia. It was to stop or not to stop. In London, at the Russian Consulate, where my passport was viséd, I had asked the tall Anglicised Russian about Irkutsk.

"No one ever goes there, Madame," he said. "We advise you not to stop. Wait a minute. One of my assistants was in Siberia for five years."

The assistant was a white-faced youth, stocky and short.

"I was in an office in Siberia for five years. Yes. There is nothing to see. You had better not leave the train."

I thanked him and his superior officer, with the feeling that they both thought I was a sort of freak, even to dream of stopping in Siberia. When a Russian advises you not to visit some portion of his country, you naturally want time

in which to consider the matter. There was the trip out. Probably I should arrive at some decision.

Now the crucial moment had come. A ticket must be bought to somewhere. Was it to be Irkutsk, Taiga, or Moscow? I am keeping a warm place in my heart for the particular man who chanced to be in charge of the Wagon-lits office in Shanghai.

"I want to stop over at Irkutsk. Do you think it is safe?"

He adjusted his eyeglasses.

"The office does not advise it, but if you are willing to take the risk — why not?" he said.

"Can one buy a ticket to Moscow with stop-over privilege?"

"There's only one train a week — of the International Company — but there are two Russian state trains. I can only give you the ticket as far as Irkutsk — since you are to stop. I wish I could arrange it otherwise."

So it was settled by a twist of the wrist — I was stopping at Irkutsk. We exchanged the most cordial civilities, this man and I. We slipped from English into French for that. To

wish him long life and happiness was on the end of my tongue, but what would you? It isn't the usual form of parting, in French.

My *filleule* was not pleased. "You'll get interested in some local custom, or in some person, and you'll lose your train, or all your money'll be stolen — or something. You'd much better take the Wagon-lit straight to Moscow."

She was right; it seemed the simpler thing to do. Still, the ticket was bought. I knew in the lining of my heart I was glad.

A small tragedy had happened meanwhile. The Ensign bridegroom's ship was ordered to Foo Chow. The navy knows no law and no appeal. His absence made my going harder.

The two naval officers who came to see me off were gay. The very air was intoxicating. Caroline was married. Whatever her life was to be, it would not be lived alone,— which, by the way, may be one of the primal reasons for a woman's marrying.

To be a foreigner in Shanghai is to become instantly one of a group. I had appeared twice at a desk in the Chartered Bank, and I naturally recognized the well-set-up Englishman who pre-

A barricade against the police in Moscow

sided there, when I saw him at the Customs wharf. He had been cool the first time, very pleasant the second, and now he took off his hat with some ado. The explanation — with Englishmen there is often an explanation,— lay in the fact that the host at one of the dinners that were given for us lunched at the Chartered Bank mess. It seems to be a general custom for bachelors to have sumptuous quarters and then take their meals at some mess.

The grandiose porter of the Palace Hotel assured me that my effects were all on the dock,— baring his teeth in a tantalizing smile that brought a dollar Mex. out of my pocket-book as if by lightning. One hesitated to offer it,— but it was accepted.

The little tender danced over the water in the warm sun, while one of the naval officers told me the romantic story of his betrothal to a girl of fifteen. He held himself for her, although she did not know. He had seemed like a will o' the wisp before, but I looked at him now and his face was suddenly stronger, his eyes clearer. With this change my spirits fled.

Caroline was sitting wearily by, answering in

monosyllables, nervous and uneasy at facing her new life alone. The cutting of cables is never an easy job.

As if my mind had been searching for something to make the situation worse, I remembered suddenly that my long coat, that most necessary travelling adjunct, was not on the boat. It was hanging on a hook on the door of my room at the hotel. As a finish to the romantic tale, the officer was told about it.

"We'll telephone, and I think it will get here."

I had hopes of my own, for — take it by and large — a coat on one's back, when the back is in Siberia, is more useful than a coat in China.

We were sitting in the four comfortable chairs in the stern,— there were but four, and the tall porter had covered them with his arms and legs, quite without loss of dignity, until we came on board.

We were first on the swaying gangway up to the steamer. The Japanese officers bowed us to the cabin, large, airy and clean. Prophecies are dangerous, but I am venturing to assert that, if

the Japanese ever run a line of steamers across the Atlantic, with Japanese boys for stewards, it will lower the incomes of the other lines.

I was comforting Caroline,— and feeling a thousand doubts myself, almost wishing that there was no such thing as marriage in the world, — when in came the naval officer to say that the hotel was sending a boy and two coats. A foreign voice was only beginning to shout, "Ashore, ashore," as a boy and a rickshaw and two coats hove in sight, and I was again at peace with the world,— while Caroline's coat and the boy went back to the hotel.

Poor Caroline! She could stand it no longer. It was decided that they were to go back to the city at once, not waiting for the boat to start. It is Providence that makes all partings foreshadow the great one; or is it the human mind that makes the comparison? The naval officers and Caroline were in rickshaws. I threw them some last kisses and then I turned away.

O Harboring Arms, go with her!

Japanese came and went, and bowed and bowed again. The American dancing-master should have a glimpse of two Japanese saluting each

other. A German came aboard, with his Japanese servant carrying his overcoat, straw hat and umbrella. Running hither and thither like flies were tall Chinamen, in long, light-colored coats coming down nearly to their heels. Most of the coats were blue, but if you didn't like that color there were plenty of others to choose from,— maroon, red and yellow,— and they were of cotton, of silk and of damask. There were Chinamen with queues hanging down, and there were Chinamen with queues done up, and Chinamen with plain hair, cut like that of an ordinary human being.

It was cool. My fur scarf hung over my shoulders without weight. We saw many blue umbrellas tucked under blue arms, and I remembered one of the hot days in the week just past, when the landscape had been one riot of blue.

That was the rhythmic cry of the Chinese coolies, dragging down the gangplank. Coolie labor is so cheap that I counted five coolies detailed to slip the cable from one mooring. The steamer glided out into the water. Any vehicle of transportation, carrying its human freight to

their unknown future, sends a thrill through me. Its possibilities are so great.

I waited on the deck, feeling somewhat lonely. There was a fresh land breeze, and every knot brought me nearer America and those I loved. The curtains at the door of my stateroom were bobbing about as if they were alive. There are doors, and locks on the doors, but I fancy that neither locks nor doors are often used.

I took off my Paris hat and wound my head up in a blue veil, and rang for a chair. The boy didn't speak English, so we walked toward the place where there were some chairs on the deck, and he brought one down in front of my door. I looked out at the long English buildings that lined the river, commercial and European. If the foreigners are detested by the Chinese, it is not so strange. They have taken the best of everything, wherever they could lay their hands on it.

Dinner brought the eighteen passengers together. The first meal on board is a sort of roll-call, and each one goes to it expectant or callous, as the case may be. We were a mixed lot,— an Hungarian lady and her daughter, an American

from Manila, an Englishman, two Frenchmen, a German, four Japanese, and the officers. There was also a dog.

It was pleasant to have another woman on board. She was pretty and sweet looking, like a sister to her fifteen-year-old daughter. The daughter was learning English, and she was constantly saying:

"Moder, you know Moder, I go get my liddle dog."

Several times a day, she would say:

"I tell you someting, Moder. I'm hungry. I must eat, Moder."

Both mother and daughter were dashing blindly through life, the mother married twice, so far, and finding her second husband difficult to live with.

As she put it, "It's China. It's the climate. I fly into a rage and I don't know why — and then some words — and then it's over."

She was going to Hungary for the winter, to see if her health and things in general would not mend.

Life is such a crushing thing, taken in the lump, lived for one's self, for one's possible posses-

sions and one's conquests, with never a long breath of cleansing love to clear the lungs and heart.

The voyage across the Yellow Sea from Shanghai to Dalny, or Dairen, if you prefer that name, is only about forty-four hours. The little boat bobbed about like a bottle. Because of the admiral's aide, perhaps, I was asked to dine with the captain. He was Japanese, and only half bilingual. Ever since my first sea-going, I have been careful about my first meal on ship-board. I had never been seasick, and why should I try to explain to the captain the reason I was eating nothing, since, in the end, he would think I was insulting him? We struggled amicably through five courses of good enough food, garnished with monosyllabic conversation.

Then I went to my cabin. There was a perceptible swell. Writing was out of the question, for the chair would not stay in the vicinity of the table. The fact was, I felt ill. Soon I couldn't sit up.

That cholera at Shanghai! My head was throbbing and I knew my temperature was rising fast.

The one thing to do was to reach the bell and summon the boy while I had the strength.

With great difficulty I stood up,— when of a sudden I knew! It was only seasickness,— blessed seasickness! Was it ever so welcome before?

CHAPTER V

MANCHURIA

THE boats of the South Manchurian Company may not be very remarkable. Still the cabins are spacious and the service is perfect. During dinner the boy laid out my night clothes. The same noiseless-footed youth walked in and out through the early morning, bringing shoes and hot water, putting out the slippers for the bath and fixing things generally, so that the work of rising could be accomplished with the least possible effort.

Tuesday morning found us passing a hilly coast-line. The shore was red and the water very blue, with just enough of a haze over the sun to make the color perfect. With much ceremony the health officers came aboard, and we lay in a calm sea until they finished their examination at five o'clock, when we were permitted to enter the harbor. There was a Chinese trader outside, which had been unable to pass the exam-

ination and had been biding her time for ten days.

It was six o'clock when we were at the pier. The first officer told us that we could remain on board for the night if we wished. It was a warm evening. The string of electric lights outlined the long docks and was reflected in the shining water. Only four of us stayed on board, and it was for all the world like a private yacht.

The first officer presided at dinner, a singularly alert, capable young man. The little Hungarian lady was extolling the Dalny oysters.

"You can have some for breakfast, I think," he said.

Sure enough, they were there, both raw and fried, and I assure you it was a memorable feast. We paid fifty cents for it, but the thoughtfulness and courtesy are not to be paid for.

The rickshaws at Dalny have no rubber tires, and that makes a difference, but a rickshaw is a rickshaw and always fascinating. They rattled us up through the broad, bare streets for a mile, to the Yamato Hotel. Yamato is a general name applied to all the hotels controlled by the Japenese Railroad.

Port Arthur is only about an hour and a half from Dalny. We wanted to visit the scene of the great siege, but with a ticket on the International,— and only one International train a week — we hardly dared to venture.

The shops in Dalny are small and insignificant. The town is finding itself, after its total destruction during the war. There is one large department store. A man with hieroglyphics all over his coat checked the wooden shoes of the customers. We wandered about, buying the embroidered cloths that the Japanese fold inside their kimonos. There is not much of interest in Dalny, and two o'clock came none too soon for us.

From Dalny one takes a spotless new Pullman — made in Illinois — with "Sleeping Car" painted in English on the outside. The car is divided into compartments for two, with an individual wash-basin of the latest type and hot and cold water. At night one locks the door and opens the window, and it is wonderfully comfortable. A good dining car is attached to the train.

The stations from Dalny to Chang Chung have

both Japanese and English names, which is, after all, a pleasant concession.

The scenery in the Liao-Tung peninsula, through which the railroad runs, is charming. One sees Talien-wan Bay as blue as a cloud, lying in the warm red soil. The South Manchurian Railroad runs from Dalny, where passengers leave the boat and take the train to Chang Chung, connecting there with the real Trans-Siberian Railroad. The direct line of the Trans-Siberian Railroad continues east from Chang Chung to Vladivostock, whence one continues to Japan. The Japanese line from Chang Chung south to Dalny is only for passengers going to China.

Manchuria, or "The Eastern Province," as the Chinese call it, lies to the north-east of China. It consisted at first of a group of small Tartar and Manchu principalities, of which Mukden became the capital. Some of the missionaries on the train going out had said that they could easily distinguish between Manchus and Chinese. The Chinese are much cleverer intellectually — a fact that may be due to the grant by the state to adult Manchus of a monthly pension. This is not

Ready for Market

large, but they can live on it, and it allays any sprouting ambition.

It is not until one passes through the country that one understands the desire of both Russia and Japan to possess this fertile land. The war was recent enough to have left marks all along the way. Dr. and Mrs. Christie had invited me to visit them at Mukden. I should have been glad to see the medical school, which has been such a blessing to that region. Both Dr. Christie and his stanch little Scotch wife were in the midst of the danger, and came through it, giving courage and help to all whom their hands touched. The King added a few letters after Dr. Christie's name, but they have not changed his modest spirit.

There was intensive cultivation in the country through which we passed. In October, men were still plowing the fields with oxen, and on the road we saw queer, covered carts drawn by two or three mules, one in front of the other. The carts looked like discarded prairie schooners. The wheels are made with a very heavy rim, and equipped with a beam-like cross-bar, instead of spokes.

Although the railroad belongs to the Japanese, and a strip of land on either side of the track is their property, the inhabitants are almost entirely Chinese. If I were a diplomat, I should be interested in following any possible Japanese expansion in Manchuria.

The Manchurians are very tall, and their faces are a bit terrifying. The men, working in the fields, wear light-blue, baggy trousers, gathered in at the ankle, and a short, light-blue shirt. The flapping city coat, clinging to the heels, is dispensed with. Sometimes the worker hangs his shirt on a tree, which leaves him encumbered with only one garment.

There are great ditches cutting up the fields in every direction, the remains of the military occupation of the country, but wherever there is a level space of twenty or thirty feet between the ditches the land is cultivated with nicety. Millet is the great crop, and there is much wheat. Millet is the staple of the country — the grain for food and the stalks for fencing, building and even for fuel. Barley is also raised.

You look out of the car window and you feel glad. The earth itself rejoices. Good care is

being given it, and there is the breath of prosperity in the air. One feels this more in the country than in the towns.

We have just passed a Chinese scare-crow. You wouldn't think that a scare-crow would change nationality, but it does. The flap of the trousers is Chinese and the hat cannot be paralleled outside of Mongolian territory.

The stations are curious white buildings, and in many of them the compound idea is carried out by a high, white picket fence, which runs between the platform and the station. At Khinagan station a crowd of Mongolians squatted on their knees behind the fence and gazed through the bars. They looked for all the world like caged monkeys. They wear long queues in this part of the country. If nature has not been generous in the allotment of hair, a switch is added, and that is pieced out with black string, so that the queue, as a finished article, comes well below the knees.

We are passing a village now. It is in the form of a compound, with a mud wall enclosure, seven or eight feet high. The gate has a pretty thatched roof. The houses are one-storied and

low, built in blocks. Fancy that, with all the empty country round about. A sort of red lamp-shade hangs near the gate, as propitiation to the gods. Banners for the same purpose are on the walls of the houses. There are no doors or windows — simply holes, with no visible means of closing them. The houses are made of mud. The houses, the road, and the people are all of one color, an effect which is not exhilarating. A Chinaman slinks along, and some black sheep run across the road, followed by two black pigs.

Not half an hour farther on, there are great hills reaching down towards us. A girl is working in the field with her father. She raises her slant eyes, smiles at the train and waves her hoe. There are few houses to be seen, simply great hill after great hill; still in every valley through which the railroad passes there are many Chinamen working in the fields. Where do they all live? I hunted up the porter and asked him. "Lif?" he said. "Allwhere." As you notice, La Compagnie Generale des Wagon-lits holds that its employees shall speak English.

From fellow-travellers who knew Manchuria I learned that for safety the inhabitants live in

Buriat beauties

Buriat hut

compounds and go out five or ten miles to their fields. The same manner of village life prevails throughout Siberia.

CHAPTER VI

ANNA AND THE PRINCE

AT Chang Chung the next day we found the real Trans-Siberian. The cars of the first class are upholstered in velvet and the compartments are for two persons only. There is a lavatory between every two compartments. In the second class there are compartments for two and compartments for four, with lavatories at each end of the car. The upholstery is in rep, covered with crash. Both classes use the same dining car, and the difference in comfort is infinitesimal. There are numerous racks for baggage, and in some of the cars there is a large place over the aisle for storing luggage.

The next afternoon, we reached Kharbine, where the special car of Prince Arthur of Connaught was attached to our train.

I had asked Madame la Hungarienne and her daughter to take coffee with me at Kharbine during the hour's wait. There is a long table oc-

cupying the center of the Kharbine restaurant. It is cluttered with candelabra and great displays of wine, so there is little room left for patrons. Along the side of the room are booths, containing tables for six. Every booth was taken, until we found one in which was Monsieur Français No. 1. He had been in China for twenty months without his family, and he was as glad as the rest of us to be facing homewards. He invited us into his booth, to be his guests. Before the coffee had arrived, along came Monsieur Français No. 2, also from Shanghai. He was as short as the other was tall, rather cramped, and his Jewish face held little promise. He sank down on the bench. "Oh, la! la! I pay for all. I am so happy! I got my trunks through. I have no duty. All that lace — all that silk! Nobody saw one yard. Won't you have something else?"

In the next compartment to mine was an English woman, whose husband is in an embassy at Pekin. She had two children. One was a little girl of ten. She was much excited by the coming of this live prince. Their compartment was the last in the regular train and the prince's car would come next. It was being very near.

The prince's car was hitched on. Anna saw the men enter.

"Which is the prince? Do you know? Do you suppose anyone will know?" she asked.

Everyone knew before the next stop. It was the tall, young fellow, with a good English face and a slight limp. There were two tall, lanky young men in his suite, to say nothing of older and shorter varieties. Anna sat often on one of the seats that one can turn down, at the long aisle. They are for looking out of the window. Anna sat there to see if the prince might pass. He evidently had a penchant for dining in his own car. The servants went to the first service table and the suite to the second.

One day a pleasant old gentleman in the suite spoke to the child. She was radiant.

"Prince Arthur is going all the way to London with us. The old gentleman can't go. He has to escort the Queen Mother home."

Anna's mother had received a letter, asking her to look out for Bobby Somebody, if Prince Arthur came to Pekin. Anna picked Bobby out. "I believe he's that very tall one, who smiles and swears," she said.

He did swear.

From Manchuria station to Kharbine there were forest fires every little while. They were made and tended by soldiers. The fires were built in parallel rows, and then in lines going in the other direction, like a checker board. The soldiers usually stand by to see the fires burn. After dark, it was like the long grasp of a giant, who was marking off the world with fingers of fire.

They came near the train. One afternoon, near Borzia, we stopped short. The fires had crept down to the very track. Two porters went forward to see if the train could pass through the flames.

The Prince and his suite sauntered out. The one whom we called Swearing Bobby roundly cursed the train and all its servants, and he ventured to advise them to go on and not lose any more time.

His diagnosis was not far out of the way. After the two porters had looked at the fire they came slowly back, talking gravely to each other. They waved their arms wildly, swung on the train, and we were off through the fire.

At the stations they have a delightful way of announcing the time of the departure of trains. A bell rings once as the train pulls in. Five minutes before departure the bell rings twice, and just before the train starts it rings three times.

I had gotten in soon after the two bells each time all day, and the train had stayed on indefinitely. At Khilok the pleasant American woman with whom I was walking agreed that it was too bad to go in one minute before we had to. The air was clear and crisp and biting.

Ding — dong! We continued to promenade.

Ding — dong — dong! And we were opposite the middle of a car. The train slid along. We ran to the nearest steps. The door was closed. We ran to the next. I hoisted the lady, and took a long jump myself. It is doubtful if I should have come by that particular train, if the strong arm of Swearing Bobby had not helped me.

There we were on the platform of the car, entirely blocked with wood, which had been thrown aboard. We were in most high society. I was next the prince, who was smiling and gay, while we waited for the porter to push the wood aside.

Each car has a heating system of its own, and wood is taken on frequently. I went to tell Anna about it and I wished it might have been she who had had the experience.

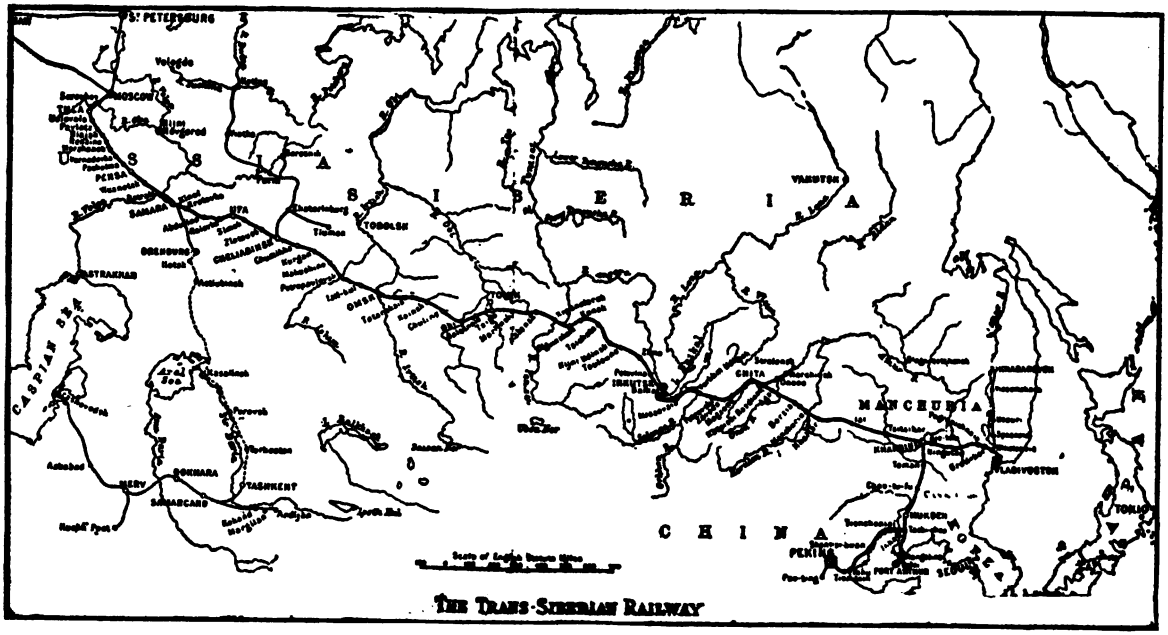
CHAPTER VII

IRKUTSK

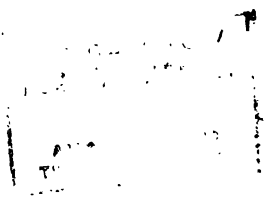
OUR route lay through Stretensk, on the Shilka River, and Chita, which is a large town and well worth visiting. Like all the Siberian towns, it was made by exiles. These men took the little clump of huts which comprised the place, drained the marshes, filled in the swamps, and entered into commerce with their neighbors. The main street is called Damskaya, or Ladies' Street, in honor of the brave women who followed their husbands into exile. There are still many Cossacks at Chita,— and wherever they are, one is not apt to languish for excitement.

Between Sokhodno and Yablonovaya is the tunnel on which is carved on the east end "To the Pacific" and on the west end "To the Atlantic."

Irkutsk is the capital of Siberia, and it is at Irkutsk that all the Trans-Siberian world has to change from one train to another, which stands



THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY



alongside. Coming westward, the change occurs at eleven o'clock at night. There are probably reasons for it, but my layman's eyes fail to perceive them. They had oiled that train every two or three hours, from Kharbine to Irkutsk. There is a large receptacle for oil on the top of every axle, and they pour the fluid into the boxes until it runs over. Perhaps the wheels cannot stand such oiling all the way across the continent. Be that as it may, you and your baggage descend at Irkutsk.

Porters, who are six feet tall, enter the compartment and fight for the privilege of taking your baggage. They are so huge, with white aprons strapped about them and a conspicuous number on their blouses, that one feels sure that they could quickly dispossess the train of all luggage without effort. They have no such wish, however. They are only after a few kopeks.

When the better man stood before me, I sat on my five pieces of luggage until I said, in halting Russian, "Take it to the platform," with a "Pahzhals" added, of course. It had taken a good hour to piece that sentence together from the phrase-book, and then to glue it into my mind.

As it was, it had to be repeated three times before the porter grabbed a suitcase and waved it for assent, saying "Da, da, da, da."

In some way the news that I was to stay over at Irkutsk had gotten about. The passengers came in twos and threes to beg that I would reconsider the plan. The advice was very tempting. The people on the train had been pleasant and it would have been comfortable to go on. I half wished I was to know Irkutsk only from post-cards. Besides, everybody was agreed that it was an unheard-of thing to do, alone; and, as the American argued,

"You can't tell what will happen, if you stop in Irkutsk, but if you stay on this train you'll surely reach Moscow."

One point, at least, was settled: if one was to stop at Irkutsk, some arrangement must be made in advance. The Chef-de-train spoke only Russian, with a few words of French and no German. I addressed myself to the Sous-chef, a comely young man, who spoke perfect French. The train staff changes at Irkutsk. He was descending from the train, he would himself take me to the hotel, and he would telegraph in ad-

vance. Everything seemed smooth and easy. I wasn't likely to perish while there was a French-speaking person about.

The prince's secretary went through the train just before dinner at night and I knew from the happy faces about that he had been distributing the coin of the realm.

The Legation Lady and I went in to dinner. The Sous-chef is in charge of the dining car. He was sitting at a table with two other railroad officials, and they were drinking. Dinner on the Trans-Siberian is not a long feast — only three courses, not counting the vodka, which is passed first, and the cordials, which come after.

Very soon, one of the men was waving a twenty-five ruble note aimlessly in the air. He tried to put his cap on his head. They were all excited, but the dapper Sous-chef still had control of himself. The head waiter tried to get his attention, to have him walk about and collect the money for dinner. The Sous-chef rose, pulled down his military coat, and with legs well apart made the rounds without accident.

But woe and woe! To be taken to the hotel by that man?

The Legation Lady helped me. Together we sought the Chef-de-train and explained to him in three languages that his assistant was drunk, and that I did not want him as an escort. The Chef smiled a kind smile, and waved his large hand. "Ich — moi. Bleeskah le quai."

"Bleeskah?"

"Bleeskah."

It might mean across or near. The word was cozily in the phrase-book, and it meant close-by.

There was nothing to do but leave it to Providence and the Chef-de-train. The Legation Lady put her children to sleep and came in to lie down in my cabin. That encouraging man in the office at Shanghai had given me a compartment to myself. Monsieur Français No. 1 and Monsieur Français No. 2 arrived to say goodbye.

"I see you start. Anyt'ing I can do?" Monsieur Français No. 2 said it.

Siberian trains are on time. We rolled up to several stations five minutes before we were due; but just to prove the rule it was half past eleven when we heard the first bell at Irkutsk.

Eastern Siberian Reindeer

It was as dark as a black cat. I could feel my courage ebbing. It was soon at low tide.

As winter comes on, bands of half-wild dogs trot to the incoming trains in search of scraps. They are said to attack anyone who is alone and who stops. I spoke to them often. They hardly looked up. They turned their heads and ran. They were scudding under the train now. The porter and the luggage and I waited on the platform. Two soldiers were guarding the prince's car. Happy man! He was going on to Moscow.

The Chef-de-train appeared. He talked to the porter, and that individual disappeared with the five pieces of luggage. I waved my hand to them in the darkness. If I never saw them again, they'd feel better to be together. The Chef took me into the restaurant, the only waiting-room of a Siberian station, and turned his honest eyes upon me, his ten fingers held up. "Dix minutes," he said.

It was a pleasant ten minutes. The passengers came to have tea and other liquids, and to see if the cigarets were any better at Irkutsk than on the train. General Carrington told me

years ago that the Indians say the white man always plays with his mouth. He is forever smoking or drinking or chewing or eating.

The American and the Englishman wanted to know if they could do anything for me. It was Monsieur Français No. 2, the squat little Jew, who did not ask, who camped in a chair near by.

The door opened. The Sous-chef swaggered in. Hat in hand, and heels perilously near together, he inquired if everything was right.

My heart stood still. I could see the darkness outside, and I heard the second bell for the Wagon-lit train. Would that I were on it!

I found voice to say, "I am waiting—"

"For the Chef-de-train," he said, taking the words out of my mouth.

He stood at attention. After a moment, he bowed punctiliously and retired.

Still Monsieur Français No. 2 sat there. I reminded him of his valuable lace, which would go on without him, if he missed the train.

"Lace? Yes. One thousand dollars lace. But lady 'lone at Irkutsk? Impossible."

Nothing would make him go.

The restaurant was now nearly empty. In the corners, peasants were huddled together, with their bundles. An occasional woman slept on the benches around the room. The swinging door opened, and the Chef-de-train's bulky figure wedged through it. At last! Then Monsieur le Français got up.

"Goo' night. Bon voyage. We'll t'ink."

His squat back shone with scintillating kindness, as he rushed to his train.

The Chef strode ahead with the resounding step of the Russian man. He held the door and raised his hand. A droshky drove toward us. Station cabs in any land are not paragons. This was not. We pitched and rolled. As if that wasn't enough, the Chef's deep bass growled a few words to the cabman, and he whipped up his horse until we were flying through the frosty air with great leaps and starts.

I liked it. Siberian horses filled me with wonder all the way. Yesterday, I saw a middle-aged mare playing hide-and-seek through the trees with her foal. When the drivers want to stop their horses, they make a queer little br-r-r-r

with their tongues. It's a caressing sound, and the horse stops instantly.

We had arrived at the entrance to a long bridge. There was toll to be paid for its upkeep. We went on and on interminably. It was bitterly cold, and I shivered under the furs.

CHAPTER VIII

A SIBERIAN HOTEL

THE hotel was ablaze with light. In the restaurant, the orchestra was playing "The Count of Luxembourg." We stepped inside the warm, lighted building. Monsieur le Chef-de-train was talking to the proprietor, and I looked about. It was one o'clock at night, but it might as well have been mid-day. There didn't seem to be a vacant seat in the restaurant.

The Russian conversation was still continuing, so I walked over to have a glimpse of the tables. I fancied no one would see me. Instantly, three officers were at my side — as if by magic. I simply walked back to the Chef-de-train, and stood close beside him. The officers faded into the distance, and I didn't even look towards the restaurant again.

My passport was given to the proprietor. I bade Monsieur le Chef good-night, and went up the uneven staircase with a porter. The steps

were not all the same height, so coming up or going down was a series of adventures. There were mirrors and wax flowers on the landing.

Three rubles — a ruble is fifty-two cents — was the limit that I wished to pay for a room. I had been told on the train that I must fix the price, for the hotels have a sliding scale of charges. The room was on the second floor. It was long, with one window and one door. Heavy velvet curtains hung over the door and the window. Fancy blue velour covered the bed.

There were no sheets or pillow-cases. When I drew the attention of the chambermaid to this, she smiled and said,

"Da, da, da." The linen, for which an extra charge is made, was brought. The chambermaid couldn't tuck the sheets in, because they didn't reach the foot. That's a detail. Fortunately, I am not very tall. The bed was made for the Russian masculine height.

There were double windows, and paper was pasted over the cracks. I took my nail file and drew it down the paper, the length of the window. It was an unnecessary effort. Under-

Parade in front of the Cathedral at Irkutsk

Village compound of Anuj-Noir, in the Altai district

neath the paper was putty. Both the outer double windows and the inner ones were puttied up for the winter. No breath of air was to enter that room until spring.

There was a good writing-table, another table for the service of meals, a sofa, and four chairs, besides a wardrobe. The wash-stand was an elaborate affair of marble and wood, with the water held in a reservoir above the bowl and drawn by means of a faucet. There was only one defect in the arrangement — there was no stopper in the basin. The nice little chambermaid brought a cork, which we wrapped in paper, and it served perfectly.

She brought a great jug of boiling water for my bath. What more could one ask? God was in His heaven,— the faces that I loved looked over from the desk,— where could one be more safe?

The sleep of the weary is deep, and I was not quite ready for my breakfast when it appeared as ordered at nine.

I have a provincial longing for cream in my coffee, which was arrived at by means of the Russian phrase-book, from which I was never

separated. The sounds are extremely difficult. People don't understand, even when you think you are getting moderately near the correct pronunciation. In this happy book, there are three parallel columns, giving respectively the English, the Russian, and the pronunciation. One can always point to the Russian phrase. The little chamber-maid did not read quickly. I kept my thumb on the important word, and in a minute she had the whole idea. The Siberian butter is very good. It is doled out in large pats.

The parting words of the Chef-de-train had been to the effect that he would be back at ten o'clock. It was already past ten. I began to have doubts. With only two days at one's disposal one must not miss the high mass at the largest church.

In the hotel corridor there was no one who spoke even German. My infallible book saved the day. The sentence was made up and said. It failed to hit the mark. I said it again, with no better success. Then I showed it to them — one word on one page and one on another. They understood everything but church. That word

wasn't to be found and it was the keynote of the situation. I walked aimlessly into the deserted restaurant, and on the opposite corner of the street was a church! — I drew a small church on a piece of paper, then a larger one, and a larger. Since we were getting down to particulars, I did want to go to the largest. Everybody was happy.

"Pahneemah'yoo — pahneemah'yoo."

The porter, whom I was seeing for the first time, talked a long while to the cabby,— and I started off. Every block or so there was a church. Some had more spires, some had less. Would that driver know which one? Taking my life in my hands, I rose to my feet. Did the izvostchik regard that as anything unusual? We simply went faster. I took a good hold of his pretty metal belt and said,

"Blagovestchensk."

If he could only have answered "Da" or "Net," I should have understood. He said a long, long sentence and whipped his horse. On the train they had told me that cabbies took their fares to prison and made awful complaints against them. We had passed churches enough

for two towns and were still going forward at a sprightly gait.

What useless fears! We were drawing up in front of a church and it was the Blagovestchenk. I had seen a picture of it.

The wooden steps were lined with beggars. One who was lame threw his hat in front of me. Another beggar pushed the hat away with his foot. Another opened the door. Inside, they were celebrating mass. The priest wore a gorgeous red and gold chasuble, and his acolyte was clothed in the same colors.

There are no organs in Greek churches, no instruments of any sort. The vibrant tones of the male choir rose and fell in minor thirds. The priest's voice was a beautiful, strong bass. The low arches gave back an echo. The musical cadence rose in gushes of sound until one boy's voice held the last exultant note. The music thrilled and stilled me.

An old woman, kneeling on the floor, swayed back and forth, kissing the stones. There were no chairs. There were not even mats — simply the stone floor. The congregation either stood or knelt. The women wrapped in furs stood;

the women with shawls over their heads and the men in blouses knelt. There were no men with the well-dressed women. Even the incense had a different odor, a spicy, alluring smell. The altar was all gilt; gold and precious stones were everywhere. At the entrance of each church there is a fenced-off space for the sale of candles. The worshippers take their tapers and kneel before the chosen shrine; then, rising, light the taper from another, and leave it to burn for the glory of the saint and the joy of the beholder.

A voice beside me said,

"Bonjour, Madame."

There was the hearty face of the Chef-de-train, and beside him Monsieur le Sous-chef — as fit as if he hadn't drunk a drop the night before. Even the whites of his eyes were clear and shining. We walked through the cathedral, and then went over to the oldest church in Irkutsk. There were three huge bells in the windows of the cupola. They were seldom rung.

This was Sunday, you remember. A priest, with the long robe and long beard of his class, came through the door. Halt and lame, the

beggars, to a man, rose and took off their caps. He stopped to speak to the oldest beggar.

This church was built of white cement, and its turrets were green, with an occasional gold picture at the top of the windows. The low, round arches and huge columns of the interior were white too. The same spicy incense filled the air. There was only one old man tending the counter.

The archbishop's house adjoined the church, — a rambling white shack, of some pretentiousness. A soldier guarded the entrance. Soldiers are not at a premium. In Siberia, they are strewn around with a liberal hand, both in town and in the country. In the country, they hunt in twos, and you may find them on a mountain or on the plain.

We walked into town, passing stretches of high board fence and buildings of all varieties. There is no sort of order in the architecture of Irkutsk. Adjoining a good-sized brick building will be a shanty. Most of the houses are built of logs. It is difficult to remember that one is four thousand miles east of Moscow.

The few descriptions of Irkutsk had spoken of

The boy's school at Irkutsk

it as the Paris of Siberia. The only points of likeness that a casual survey gives are that Irkutsk has the sins, the false hair, and the perfume, for which Paris is noted.

The shops are stucco-faced and whitewashed, with green roofs. Looking over the town, it appears to be made of green and white, with streaks of mud.

The sidewalks were full of people. The Chef took the outside and the Sous-chef the inside, while I walked between. If a band of officers stretched too far across the walk, Monsieur le Chef strode ahead and there was room. We walked up and down the Esplanade, which is at the head of the principal street, "Bolsche Kaya," or Great Street. The river looked cold and forbidding.

Monsieur le Sous-chef translated for his superior. The Angara river freezes from the bottom up, and in the spring thaws in the same way. Even in the hot mid-day of August no one bathes in the river; it is too cold. There is a local tale of a man who found the summer heat insupportable and jumped into the river to cool off. He went down, seized by cramp.

"In the winter, Madame, the skating is wonderful. You should see it!"

Across the street was the Museum, of brown stone, which, with the Theater, forms the pride of the citizen's heart. I noticed that Monsieur le Chef paid some slight entrance fee. The collection embraces specimens of Siberian ore, game, fish and animals. It is not complete, but the plan is well thought out and the arrangement is interesting. Early Siberian implements and utensils are well represented. There are dressed figures of Buriats, Tulugus, and many others. The Chef called my attention to the specimens of rhinoceros and other mammals, which are found in the Lena valley, in the "urmans," or morasses, of Siberia. The Russian peasant believes that these animals still exist, for after a particularly cold winter, when a river-bank is demolished by the ice-packs, the remains of these monsters are found. They have been so well preserved that one can hardly believe that they come from another period of the world's history. There is a ready market for the ivory thus obtained.

From the Museum we walked up the Bolsche

Kaya to the Hotel Central. My guardians inquired if I was dining in my room.

"No, I'm coming down, because I want to see the people."

"The people are anxious to see you," the Sous-chef said. "The proprietor was hoping you would come down."

From my room, at one o'clock, I heard the orchestra begin with a true Wagnerian fanfare of violins and drums. They were singing the drinking chorus from "Pagliacci."

I bustled about. If I must represent America, I would do my best. Out came my newest Paris street gown, good shoes, my only hat, brushed to a finish — and I descended, escorted by that book of Pierre Coulevain's, which has been so much discussed, "L'Ile Inconnu." Head up and eyes down, I walked the length of the dining-room and sat down in an alcove, where I could see everything but where I should not be so much observed.

While the menu was being served, several things occurred. The proprietor, egged on by that active Chef-de-train, had made the menu half American and half Russian. It began with

a soup that is the delight of the Russian heart — bortsch. It is made of stock, to which cabbage and beets are added. It is eaten hot and in great quantities, with unsweetened whipped cream. Little pâtés, containing chopped meat, accompanied it. This first course was an entire dinner in itself. A delicious salmon followed, roast beef, and a sort of dessert not unlike ladylocks in America. The whole cost was three rubles.

The dining-room had a stage at one end. The orchestra played. Six girls — not so very young — sang sometimes on the stage and at other times walked about and drank at the tables. It was a simple café chantant. There were comparatively few people. In the evening, there is usually a crowd.

After dinner, I wished to inquire about the Lutheran church, because one of the books on Siberia that I had read had spoken of the pastor with enthusiasm.

That morning I had seen the pastor of the Protestant church drive up in a droshky. He carefully lowered his bulky form to the sidewalk, counted out the fare, gave it to the cabby,

took the remainder of his cigar from his mouth and added that as a pourboire. It was well received. The cabby took off his hat. I wanted to know if this was the Lutheran church, opposite.

It was an idle question. It was asked in my best German, still, no one knew. The barber wasn't in evidence. The garçon who spoke German said he was Catholic.

I let it go at that.

I had a half-formed plan to drive. It was useless; I shouldn't be able to make them understand. I went upstairs, feeling a bit alone.

In a few minutes, a knock came at my door. I opened it, thinking it might be the Chef-de-train, although I had said to him that I should be writing all the afternoon. The head waiter and another man stood there. The man spoke in French. He said that he was a Frenchman, but that his business was in Russia, and that the office, or to speak more correctly the corridor, was afraid that I needed something, and that he had come to see if he could be of any assistance.

He came in, and we stood talking. He represented the concentrated essence of the curiosity

of the hotel. I was glad to explain. It was only fair.

"Why are you here, Madame?" he asked.

I told him about my best beloved, and how I chanced to be crossing the continent alone.

"It's only an American who would have stopped at Irkutsk," he said. "Not many American women have seen this town. There are two of my friends — Frenchmen — down stairs. We're dining in the restaurant. If you would condescend to come down, we should be delighted. You can depend absolutely upon us. We understand that you're an American. It would be a great pleasure if you would dine with us."

I thanked him, and explained that I had already been in the restaurant for nearly two hours and that I should not feel comfortable to go down again.

Within half an hour there came another knock at the door. It was another Frenchman. He said they had finished dining and they thought if I did not care to come down to the restaurant I might enjoy a drive. He said they were leaving on the ten o'clock train. They would all go, and the drive should be only as long as I

chose. Any time that I wished, they would bring me back to the hotel.

I longed for a breath of air but I knew that it was not best to go. I thanked him, telling him that I'd like to go, but that I was quite alone in Irkutsk and it did not seem wise. I told him about my writing, and that it kept loneliness away. That wasn't quite true. I was really homesick that Sunday afternoon.

An hour later the work was interrupted for the third time. I guessed who it must be. Yes — it was the third Frenchman. Like his friends, he had an honest face.

"We've been talking it over," he said, "and we thought you might enjoy seeing the Irkutsk Club. You couldn't go there alone. We have guest cards, and we should be glad to take you. We'll all go together and you can come home whenever you like. We have to be back in the hotel by nine-thirty to catch our train."

I had heard about the Irkutsk Club on the International train. They had told me that young school-girls of sixteen and eighteen went there in their gymnasium suits to take supper with officers. There were no chaperons, and these

young girls of what were called good families were permitted to drink champagne. I longed to see if it was true, but it was not to be on this trip. I had another twenty-four hours to stay in Irkutsk, and I had been warned of the perils of the place.

This I explained, reluctantly, to the third Frenchman.

"But your book, Madame!"

"Bien — it could not be."

When we had thrashed it out and the decision remained the same, he told me that they would be sitting in the restaurant until half past nine, and if I wanted them to translate anything they were there at my service. Then he went away.

I couldn't write. My mind was a miserable blank. A sudden, appalling loneliness settled over me — a haunting ache to see my family. Even the pictures did not help. America was nearly ten thousand miles away. I wished that someone — anyone — would come to the door, so that I might hear a human voice.

In desperation I rang for the garçon and ordered a supper, which I couldn't eat, just to see a mortal face. There wasn't a breath of air.

The room was stifling, but I did not dare to open the door into the hall. As for going down to the corridor, where there were blasts of cold air, I knew that was out of the question too. The only relief was to lean up against the cold window and look out at the chilly night.

I was playing that I was a little girl, and little girls don't go out without their families. Since I was a little girl I let myself listen to the footsteps in the hall, to see if perchance they would stop at my door. They never did. In the streets were officers hurrying along. One man in a long cape ran across the street towards the hotel. The lights from the corridor struck across his shiny boots and his white trousers. I set myself to making up a story about him. The droshkies that passed were outlined in shadow and the tall caps of the drivers became gnomes' hats. I wished I was out there. I longed for air — one breath of air,— and that room all puttied up!

Rap — rap — rap! My heart came into my mouth. It was ten o'clock. Should I go to the door? It was a gorgeously clothed officer in white and blue and gold. He spoke in Russian,

and with my heart beating one hundred counts to the minute I could make nothing of it.

"Ne pahneemah'yoo." And I shut the door and bolted it, besides putting what movable furniture there was in front of it. I said my prayers and slept.

CHAPTER IX

A DRIVE IN A DROSHKY

IT was eight o'clock when my eyes opened,—eight o'clock and a perfect early winter day! The gloom of the night before had fled. It hardly seemed to be the same Irkutsk.

I had been invited to a real Siberian house, for a real Siberian supper, at six o'clock on Monday.

The morning was given over to the banks and the shops. Banks were plentiful in this prosperous town. The Banque de Russie was opposite the hotel,—an imposing, round-front stone structure. The kind porter insisted on walking to the corner with me. A beggar opened the heavy doors.

"Gde bahnk menyahlah?"

He pointed up the stairs. Although it was after ten, the place was deserted. The demand for someone who spoke French brought a youngish man, with a Monday-morning face. Letters

of credit of any bank except the Russian are of great inconvenience in Siberia. I had American Express checks. On the dining car of the International they had not wished to cash them. Here they were more easily pleased, but it took time. I was the only customer, and yet it took an hour to acquire four hundred rubles. The time passed quickly. The interpreter told me about Irkutsk, about the shops and the theater and some of the customs. He was proud of his city.

"Do you find this place like America, Madame?"

"You like Irkutsk?"

First one would ask a question, then the other. Meanwhile clerks arrived. Plainly, an hour more or less was not regarded as of consequence. The late-coming clerk shook hands with his comrades, and smoked a cigaret before he went to his desk. At half past ten a servant brought a glass of hot Russian tea to everybody. I was included in the mid-forenoon refreshment. There were no chairs. The public is not encouraged to sit down in banks in Russia. We walked about and watched the men counting

on the abacus. They can not add two and two without moving from four to eight balls on the wires. It reminds one of a kindergarten.

The manager of the bank was not visible; he was in a private office. The assistant manager had a desk next the teller, and they held a long conversation before the actual cash was given to me. The interpreter told me that they had heard there was an American woman in town.

"America must be paradise," he sighed. "It's a long way off."

The Bolsche Kaya was lined with shops. Every other one was a perfumery or hair store. The most voluminously encircled heads are seen in Siberia, and they are topped by a towering mass of fur and feathers, which calls itself a hat. I entered one shop after another, and bought paper and envelopes, postal cards, a boy's hat and two officer's belts. Of the lot, there was only one clerk who spoke anything but Russian. The shops were well stocked but prices were high and there was no variety. The windows of the fruit shops were most tempting, with luscious apples and grapes and pears from Central Asia. There were two confectioners' shops in the

Bolsche Kaya. I bought an appetizing loaf of sweetness, covered with almonds. In Siberia there is a pleasant, black paste, with walnuts, which is very good.

Before the supper, I wanted to take a drive around the town. That meant another excursion to the corridor. I asked for the manager, who speaks innocuous French.

"Net." He was sleeping, in preparation for the night. Then I pleaded for some Deutschmann. My German is pale and young, but in a better state of health than my Russian. A florid youth emerged from the barber shop, and together we worked out a program for a drive about the city and its outskirts. It was really the head porter who made out the itinerary. He speaks only Russian, but he knew by intuition all the details that the barber couldn't quite comprehend, even in German.

The porter belongs to the small family of perfect sympathizers, whom God scatters over the earth, in white, red, black and yellow skins. I've met them in every land. They need no introduction, nor any common language, simply the speech of the soul — and they understand.

The barber said that it was to be a set-up droshky, and that it would be one ruble an hour. Ordinarily, the droshkies are only fifty or seventy kopeks. The difference appears to be in the newness of the carriage and the livery of the driver. This man wore a marvellous leather belt, studded with metal.

The governments of Irkutsk and Yeniseisk make up eastern Siberia. Including the Amur region, Siberia represents one-thirteenth of the land of the earth, and is one and one-half times as large as all Europe. The vastness of the country was visible even in the city. There would be a half block of wooden houses crowded together,— then a block of mud. At the end of that, the city spirit took possession of things again, and a brick building lifted its head; and so it went.

Irkutsk is on the right bank of the Angara river, opposite the mouth of the Irkut. It is the capital of Siberia,— that is why I so wished to see it. Tomsk was formerly much larger than Irkutsk, but the latter city has run well ahead since the railroad was built. It was laid out in 1652. For years it consisted of a dot on

the map and a log house or two. With the coming of the railroad, the town was flooded with officers and workmen. Its prosperity dates only from ten years ago. Today it looks much as a Nebraska town might have looked fifteen years ago, with the exception that the shops are more pretentious, better housed and better stocked.

The population of Irkutsk is variously stated. A medium estimate seems to be 75,000. The city, like all Siberia, occupies itself with the question of education, and spends ten per cent. of its income on schools. The Museum, the Technical School, the Theater and the Garrison are all imposing, handsome buildings. There is a good-sized observatory in the town. Irkutsk boasts of a public library, an art school, a high school for boys and one for girls, besides forty lower schools. As in all Russian cities, there are many philanthropic institutions.

Irkutsk is an exile-made town. It owes its museum, its schools, all its virtues and all its vices to exiles. In the Museum, yesterday, Monsieur le Chef showed me the founders of that institution. All of them were political pris-

oners, cultivated, learned, fearless men. There were criminal exiles too, and their descendants mar the town today.

We were evidently headed straight for the country, past the Cathedral, and past the monument that was erected in memory of the visit of the Tsar, when he came up the river to Irkutsk, before the railroad was built. The summer gardens were deserted and closed, and a worrying wind shook the bare branches of the trees. A twig had blown against a wooden bench, and tapped and tapped with its ghostly hand. The low wooden houses are a cross between a sea-shore cottage and an Alpine châlet. The roofs are low and there is much ornamentation. A triple gate protects each house. It is composed of a large center gate for horses, with a gate for foot passers on either side. The gates and the houses are both ugly.

We bumped over the uneven cobble-stones to the drive by the river. The Governor's house, on the right, was a large, white mansion, guarded by a sentry.

"The Governor has room to walk around," as one of the Russians said.

We drove by the Esplanade, where there is a monument and a pavilion or two. Tonight there were twenty or thirty dump-carts working on an extension of the Esplanade.

The only way to stay in a droshky on those wretched Siberian cart-paths — one can hardly call them roads — is to lean well back and brace yourself with your feet. You must take hold of one side of the carriage, if you expect to keep your post. As far as exercise is concerned, driving in a droshky is far ahead of horseback. The bumps are much harder and there is no rhythm about them.

We had gone out past the stately Technical School and the Garrison. The izvostchik took a sudden notion to return to town, and in the twinkling of an eye we had faced about,— right side up, but surprised and jarred. How that horse did go!

He was an artist — this izvostchik.

The sun was setting. Across the river the hills were outlined by a fringe of trees against the shining sky, like the fuzz of the coachman's fur cap. There was no color. A scintillating, golden light came from the sky and from the

Monument commemorating the visit of the Tsarevitch—Irkutsk

water. There was a fire on the shore and a kettle over it. A group of men and women stood about the fire, and their silhouettes gave off little sparkles, as they were outlined against the river. Soldiers were passing, and women who had over their heads the brown shawls that are so much worn here. Farther along there were storehouses, and boats moored to the shore.

The road grew worse. We had lost the cobble. Ther[illegible] were deep ruts in the caked mud, with [illegible] inches of dust on top of that, and thank[illegible]a'ams that sent one straight into the air in [illegible] of all precautions. At last I simply tried [illegible]nd straight, with an unconcerned air. It [illegible] hard not to laugh out loud.

[illegible] did so once, and two officers, who were pass[illegible] „ whistled violently.

"My error,"— as our English cousins say.

It made no difference where we were, the dust was appalling. It was like a thick mist at times. We passed the place where the squat watering carts come to get water from the river. One was being filled, but more than half the water was leaking from the side of the hose. The road was muddy for a distance. We met a bunch of steers

being herded by two men on horseback. You might have seen the same thing in many a western town ten years ago. The sidewalks are like the West, too,— uneven wooden affairs, well above the level of the street, so that, when mud replaces this suffocating dust, pedestrians can still move about.

Crossing the street is neither pleasant nor easy, because of the pointed cobbles, no two of which are on the same level. I admire the skill of the women, who walk about on French heels and in light gray and colored shoes. We passed one young working girl who wore them. She had no coat and no gloves. I was cold with furs on. She looked at her shoes and at the soldiers. A cloud of blinding dust blotted her out.

It was difficult now to see which was cloud and which was dust. The figures in the distance were indistinct. Dogs sprang into life. Our droshky failed to please them. There was a final lurch, a quick turn, and there was the hotel.

CHAPTER X

AN EVENING WITH EXILES

"ROBE — pas," Monsieur le Chef had said, when he brought this invitation, from one of his friends, for supper. I understood. He meant that we were not to dress up.

We rattled over across the town to a small house. The instant the droshky stopped, ten dogs rushed up, snapping and barking. They did not offer to touch us. The Chef grumbled a sentence and they disappeared.

The room which we entered was not large. It was very warm. A chair or two and a table of the simplest sort were the only furniture. In an adjoining room was a long table. There were fourteen guests, and all but three spoke either French or German. The supper began with hors d'œuvres, including a great array of canned fish. Next came bortsch, a national soup, the one with cabbage and whipped cream. Perockques, or the delicious meat patés, were served with the soup. Cold salmon, queerly dressed,

followed, and juicy woodcock, much larger than ours, browned potatoes and beets. The dessert consisted of sweet cakes and fruits, including a most appetizing melon. Wines were constantly changed. I do not drink, but this was not the place for scruples, and I sipped ten or twelve different sorts of stuff, including vodka, which is a cross between whisky and gin, and very horrid. They toasted America and my family and my voyage. No one drank very much, which surprised me.

The hostess, a short, fat woman, with a kindly face and the usual blue eyes and brown hair, told me that cooks receive fifteen to twenty rubles a month, and chambermaids twelve to fifteen rubles. Both cooks and chambermaids smoke about their work. Well-trained servants are unheard of. In this house a cook and a chambermaid were kept. The serving at the table was done by the chambermaid, assisted by an extra cook, in a bright peasant costume, who had been hired for the day.

Madame also explained to me that in the older Siberian houses the second story had partitions which reached only to within two feet of the low

ceiling. This is in order that the warm air may circulate. The houses are generally heated by German porcelain stoves, built into the partition, half of the stove being in one room and half in the next, on the other side of the wall. The upper floor is often heated only by a funnel from the floor below.

At this supper we were heaped with food and kindness and information. They assured me that Irkutsk was a safe place. No one should go in the side streets alone after dark — that was all. Of course, one kept one's doors locked,— and chained, for that matter. It was simply a precaution. You never could tell. Yesterday, a prominent man in the city had gone to church, and when he came home he found his cook killed, his house ransacked and all valuables taken. Of course it was a new country and one had to be careful.

I asked this company about the prisons, for which Siberia is famous. There was instant volubility. I must see the prison at Alexandrovski; it was only seventy versts from Irkutsk.

Going out, we had heard something of the local

jails from a retired Russian officer. This man's family had lived across the street from the jail in which prisoners were kept during their trial. The officer spoke of it flippantly.

"We had to move," he said. "There was the sound of chains all day and all night. We couldn't have the windows up in summer because of the groans of the devils. They never gave us any peace."

The company approached the subject from another standpoint. I asked them to tell me about the exiles. This they did in great detail. There was no aversion to the subject; but they no longer jested. Was it imagination, that made me fancy that every head turned, each time someone entered the room? Speaking in French, which the servants did not understand, still they would not continue the subject when the maids were present. I will try to put down what they told me, with some sequence.

The law of Russia classifies exiles under three heads:

1. Criminal convicts, the "Katorgeny Rabotniki," the mere mention of whom makes the Siberian mother gather her children closer.

They are sentenced to penal servitude in various sections.

2. Ordinary prisoners, who have committed minor offenses, and who are placed in prisons or jails.

3. Political prisoners, who are supposed to have committed some crime against the government, and who are compelled to live in a stated district and under police supervision.

I was most interested in the political exiles.

"I should so like to meet one," I exclaimed.

"Madame, you have already met one," a guest replied, rising and bowing. He was the most cultivated man in the room.

Political exiles are of two kinds, those regularly sentenced by law and those who are subject to an "administrative order," from the Minister of the Interior. The latter have no trial, but are compelled to leave their homes and go into exile within a given number of hours. The guest had left his home under these circumstances. He was given twelve hours in which to go. His family remained to close up his affairs, joining him in Siberia later.

A "political" may belong to a group that has

rights, or to one that has not. Those belonging to the first class differ from the ordinary citizens only in having to sign their names once a week in a book that is kept by the head Nachalink. They are often watched by spies, and it is necessary for them to be most circumspect in speech and action. Russian walls have ears.

The class of exiles "without rights" are permitted to enter a limited number of small trades, and the amount that they may earn is officially fixed. They must work very hard if they expect to obtain even the necessaries of life.

In the country and in the large towns of Siberia, twenty-five cents was accounted sufficient for food for a day. Plain food, with the exception of butter, is cheap. Butter sold at retail for twenty-five cents a pound in Irkutsk in 1912. Articles that have to be brought from old Russia are high.

For a man of refinement to be snatched from congenial surroundings and friends, and made to labor with peasants, and to live as an equal with people whose only recreation is eating and drinking — makes or breaks the man.

There have been various manifestoes from

Petersburg upon the exile question. Each one has improved the situation, and there is still opportunity for betterment.

The sympathy of the people is with the exiles, and in the country food and drink are often left in the open bath-houses. This is done partly through pity and partly through fear. Escaping convicts are desperadoes, who would barter life for a passport, and who spill blood easily.

I said that I should be more afraid of the bears and wolves, which are abundant, than of the convicts. A shout of derision arose.

"Oh, no! Madame. The convicts are to be feared. No one goes armed for wolves, in the country, but for convicts. When a man approaches you and stops, be the first to shoot,—unless you are tired of life."

The use of the knout is no longer sanctioned in the prisons, but a plet is used instead. This heavy whip, made of leather, weighs eight pounds, and a man can be killed by five blows with it.

The next illustration shows the Russian feeling about the instrument of torture.

Women are never flogged, neither do they work in mines. Wives who go into exile with their

husbands are allowed thirty-six pounds of bread a month, but they must conform to all the regulations under which their husbands live.

The mines at Nerchinsk employ convicts. There may be others that do. The opinion of the company was divided. The village of Gorni Zeruntui is given up to criminals, and is reported to be no worse than any other place of like size. The worst type of politicals is sent to Akatui, 140 miles from Nerchinsk. They are condemned to penal servitude. The province of Archangel, in the extreme north, is largely inhabited by politicals. It is a country of perpetual snow, and such summer as it has is very hot.

I had read such frightful stories of the imprisonment before trial, that I asked the exile about it. A change came over his face.

"Some of us suffered. It wasn't hard for me. I was in prison only seven months before my trial. I taught from morning till night. They wouldn't have even allowed me to sleep, if the rest of the prisoners had had their way."

He seemed to have touched a vital point in the exile system. The exiles are ravenous for knowledge. This man was studying English. We

"News from Home," by Pasternak

"Preparing for the Knout," by Korovine

spoke in French, because he would not trust himself, but he stopped every other sentence to inquire,

"What's the English for that?"

Once, during my journey, a Russian friend translated two chapters of "Letters by Condemned Revolutionists," which was edited by Korolenko. It was the most heart-rending thing I ever heard. Those who wrote were nearly all young,— most of them students; condemned to die, and waiting in prison until the sentence should be executed. They say, over and over:

"Is there no place for me, in the whole beautiful world? Must I die now, when I am strong and young and full of life?"

The letters are many of them to mothers and fathers,— God pity them! One letter said:

"My pigeon parents, papaska, mamaska, and my little brother Nicolinsky: I am writing this letter with my blood, through the tears in my eyes. I am sending you my heart's love."

"In America there are no exiles, Madame? Not one?"

They look up to the United States as their ideal. However unworthy we may be, it is some-

thing for our nation to inspire such enthusiasm as it does in Siberia. We took the last toast standing about the door:

"America, may we be like her!"

I changed it in my heart to "America, may she be worthy!"

It was after ten when we reached the hotel. I had asked for my bill all day, but it was only now ready. Here it is. Dinner was paid for in the restaurant. The daily charges were as follows:

Room, 3 rubles.
Dinner, 2½ rubles.
Candles, ...30 kopeks
Sheets and pillow-cases, .. 25 "
Bread and butter, ... 25 "
Coffee, ... 15 "
Cream, ... 15 "
Arranging passport, ... 35 "
Light, ... 50 "
Supper, 1½ rubles.

The tips came to 2 rubles, thus making the total hotel expenses amount to 11 rubles, or approximately $5.75, per day.

Everybody in sight was feed, not forgetting

the porter. The luggage had gone ahead, and the proprietor bowed us to the droshky. At the station, my ticket was ready and the trunks were checked through to Moscow. I was introduced to the new chef de train. A railroad official asked if I had received a letter.

"No."

"There is one in Irkutsk for you, Madame. I'll see if I can get it."

I remembered reading that no letter passes through a Russian post office without being opened.

Monsieur le Chef and the railroad official stood by while I read the letter. The official was cosmopolitan and from St. Petersburg. Monsieur le Chef leaned across and asked him, in Russian, if he could read the letter.

"No," he said, "it's in English."

It wasn't apparent which gave me the greater pleasure, the letter or being able to understand two whole sentences in Russian.

On the train going out had been the President — (the Rector, as they call him) — of the School of Technology of the University of Tomsk. He and his wife had invited me to visit them on my

return journey, and this letter was from them, giving me some extra instructions. Fortunately, my ticket allowed a stop-over.

Monsieur le Chef said goodbye. As a last kindness, he gave me a letter to every railroad official whom I should be apt to meet. He wrote especially to the station masters at Taiga and Tomsk, lest my friends might not meet me. Among my precious possessions is a copy of this letter. Translated, it reads:

"This is to introduce Madame Lee, travelling through Siberia and Moscow to America. Madame is of noble birth, and no harm must come to her. Great care should be taken in this respect."

I shall always keep Monsieur le Chef de train in my remembrance gratefully.

The Irkutsk incident was closed. The stay, looked forward to with fear, had held little that was not pleasant. Everybody had been so kind, so interested. Would Americans have been as good to a stranger? I think they would. The question would be more likely to resolve itself into a matter of time, in that dear land where everyone fancies he is so busy.

CHAPTER XI

THE GREAT SIBERIAN RAILWAY

THE beginning of this road — the great Trans-Siberian railway — was markedly Russian. The story is told that after the Tsar Alexander II. decided that it should be built, he drew his finger across the map, and the railroad was laid through the territory covered by that line. There are times when some such tale is necessary to account for the vagrant wandering of the Great Siberian. When it became known that Russia was undertaking the work, American and German firms submitted bids. Russia is a jealous mother, and it was to Russians that the work was entrusted.

The first earth was dug and the first stone was laid May 19th, 1891, at Vladivostok, by Nicholas II., when he was Tsarewitch. The occasion is still spoken of.

It happened once that a Russian asked me how to spell "fool" with five matches. The riddle

had to be given up. Slowly he went to the door and looked up and down the corridor. Then returning, he did not venture to say the words, even in English. He wrote H II, H being the Russian symbol for N. As if he had not already taken precautions enough, he rubbed it out and wrote "Good day" over the space, rubbing that out in its turn. So one safeguards a joke.

The different divisions of the railroad were ordered to be finished at certain dates. It was only the section about Lake Baikal that was permitted to take its own time. Across the Siberian wilderness, there were no obstacles to be met, until the Urals. The rapidity of the construction of the road as far as Baikal is not paralleled in railroad making. An engineer of world-wide fame was on the train going out, and he laboriously called our attention to every detail.

"We couldn't have beaten it: 2,503 miles of railroad was laid and in use within seven years. But then — look at the rails. They are light, too light. After a spring rain, the trains run off the track like squirrels."

That may be in the early spring and in the Urals, but we saw nothing of it. The rails were

Russian State Train

Lake Baikal

largely replaced by heavier ones eight years ago, the old rails being used for sidings, large numbers of which are necessary, on account of the freight trains. Yet even the present rails are light, and the ballasting of the track is not up to the standard, resulting in uneven running of the coaches. One night, between Kurgan and Ob, I thought I should roll out of my berth.

Our engineer friend always spoke of the Trans-Siberian railway as "the track of the camel," because it passes through so few towns. The caravan driver loves the lone spaces and sometimes, with reason, he fears the town.

It is astonishing how little available information there is to be gathered concerning this road. The German, French and English libraries possess many books about it, but the reading of them presupposes some leisure, and a certain nearness to the libraries. In the London bookshops we found just two English books, and in the Paris shops we found none. This would seem to indicate that the interest was slight,—still, in London, on the first of September, the reservations on the International train were all taken until the first of November.

In the Wagon-lits office, where we were trying to engage an extra place for a friend, they spoke of the Russian State Express as practically out of the question for us. Unless one demands great luxury, the Russian State expresses, two west and two east each week, are exactly as comfortable as the International train. They pass over the same road. The Russian State makes a few more stops, but the running time from Irkutsk to Moscow and Petersburg only exceeds the time of the International by four or five hours. In the fall of 1912, the Compagnie Generale de Wagon-lits was advertised as having been given charge of the Russian State trains, as well as its own; so from now on there should be little difference between them.

On this road there are four classes. The first class fare on the Russian State is approximately the same as the second class on the International, but the International train is usually booked well in advance. One car of the International Company is attached to the Russian State Express.

The International train — one from Petersburg and one from Moscow — is composed of four

coaches, a restaurant car, a service car and a long baggage car. The engines are heavy; they are variously recorded as from eighty-five to ninety tons. These trains carry first and second class passengers, and are generally full.

The Russian State Express runs one train a week, east and west, between Petersburg and Kharbine, and one between Moscow and Kharbine. The cars are smaller, and there are often as many as seven passenger coaches, besides the restaurant and the baggage car. They carry only first and second class.

The Siberian Express is a daily train, carrying second, third and fourth class passengers. It is a slow train. We never saw it moving. It was always on a siding or at a station, forever waiting for somebody or something.

In the fourth class, the compartments are very small, and the bunks consist only of boards, on which bedding, a private possession, is piled. The shelf is filled with cooking utensils, and you have only to look in at the window of a fourth class coach to see an interesting array of bread, teapot, cheese, tea caddy, and a lemon or two, mixed with bedding and wraps. The bunks are

never made up. I am not sure that the shelves have hinges. We went into only one fourth class carriage. The aisle in all Siberian trains is narrow, but this was only a foothold. And the odor! It can not be described.

The first class carriages are painted blue; the second, yellow; and the third class, green. They don't waste much paint on the fourth class. The gauge of the Trans-Siberian track is five feet. The Japanese line has a gauge of three feet and six inches.

The trains have a habit of arriving at stations by twos and threes. There is but one platform; so, if your train is the third one, you jump to the ground and find yourself in a narrow passage, in which passengers, luggage and stray dogs are commingled. If you still wish to reach the station, you climb over the rest of the intervening trains. It is needless to say that sufficient time should be allowed for the return climb.

The lower the class of the carriage, the higher the steps. No distinction of sex is made, and men and women are herded together in the fourth class, and sometimes in the third. In the vicinity

of Kharbine, where there were many travelling Chinamen, there was a disposition to put Russians by themselves.

The Russians' hold upon music extends to their great railroad, and each restaurant car contains a piano. Another luxury that the Russian State and International trains offer is a bath, placed at the end of the train, in the baggage car. There is some sediment in these baths, but they're wet — and the towels are as generous as the distance to the baggage car is long.

We had been told that on the Russian trains there is not any linen. No libel could be baser. The sheets are changed punctually twice a week on both trains. As they are folded in the berth, when it is put up for the day, one is sure of sleeping in the same sheets. Towels are changed. If the porter's attention is called to the matter, they are changed every day.

In the early days of the railroad, water was scarce, and the supply in the toilet rooms sometimes gave out. Now it strikes you that wood and water can never be lacking, since they are taken on so often.

We were told that there were trains of the

fifth class. We passed one at Ufa. It was drawn up on a siding, just freight cars filled with soldiers — another version of the inscription on every vitesse in France, "Men 40. Horses 8." The wrath that welled up within me when I first saw that sign remains in my memory now.

The train at Ufa was full of soldiers. It was morning, and they were taking turns at a wash. A soldier drew in as much water as his mouth could hold; then he trickled it out over his hands, and finished with a final spurt for his face. This acrobatic feat is accomplished by means of the tongue, and is perilous for all but the initiated. A thorough rubbing followed, and, as a finishing touch, a swipe of the coatsleeve; and the morning toilet was completed. The performer retired to his corner of the freight car, while the door space was occupied by the next washer.

No train can leave a station until a queer, coiled metal rod, which is called "the wand," is given to the engineer. He must deliver the wand on arrival at the next stop.

The third class carriages were filled with students and peasants. The women carried the largest bundles; and the travelling Russian

world looked happier than that which we saw at the stations. They take a little journey as though they would have a spree. Travelling third class costs only about twenty-five cents for a hundred miles.

The children carried the tea-kettles. It was only a lonely man who tied his kettle to his bundle, and pushed until the queer-shaped luggage went through the door. Except for the fact that they probably have neither sheets nor pillow-cases, one would be ready to swear that those articles form the sole travelling-bags of the peasants.

Military travellers are allowed to occupy a class higher than they pay for. On the train going out were a tall, bow-legged officer and his pretty wife, with a baby and a nurse. The officer and his wife were in the first class, the baby and the nurse in the second class. The man possessed a tremendous mustache, and for one hour every morning he sat in the end of our car, with his mustache in a steel curler. Most of us walked past him; it was the first implement of the kind I had seen. He did not mind our attention in the least — he really liked it. At the

larger stations, people came to greet him, to admire his mustache, and to kiss the hand of his wife.

Just as there is a rule for salutations, there is a fixed date for most things in Siberia. For instance, the outer windows of the trains are screwed down on the fifteenth of October. After that, the only air that can creep in must enter by way of the corridor.

In the minds of many Siberian travellers, there must lurk the memory of the marching bands of convicts, described by Tolstoi in "Resurrection." They no longer march, they go in trains — convict trains. We saw two of them. They were composed of freight-cars, with one or two tiny iron-barred windows in each car. Soldiers guarded all doors, and there were soldiers drawn up along the platform. Escaping would not be easy.

We met one train in the early evening. The small windows were filled with heads. Mashed against the iron bars was a man's face, that riveted the attention. It was very pale, with staring dark eyes and a thin, close-shut mouth,— the most hopeless human countenance I have ever seen.

CHAPTER XII

BAIKAL

THE fare on the International from Moscow to Shanghai, by way of Kharbine, is £44, 8s, first class, or £32, 4s second class. Three meals a day in the dining car cost three and a half rubles, about $1.75; or if one has a continental breakfast of coffee and rolls, it is thirty kopeks, and dinner at night is two and a half rubles. The fare on the Russian State from Moscow to Shanghai is £30, first class, or £20, second class.

The past summer, the Minister of Ways and Communications hoped to reduce the time from Moscow to Vladivostok to eight days and seventeen hours; but our train took ten days. The ultimate aim is to have a six-day train from Vladivostok to Petersburg. The wireless, which is being installed between Petersburg and Kharbine, will be of much use to the railroad.

The tourist who starts from London or Paris

is apt to reach Moscow by way of Berlin and Warsaw. This means passing the frontier at Alexandrovo in the night, which is not convenient. There is nothing, however, to be feared. Everyone goes into the large station, and the passports are taken. After this, the doors are locked, while the officers ascertain whether you are a fit person to enter Russia. This proceeding is not rapid, and a fair share of the time is consumed in having one's luggage examined. The Russian duties exceed ours, but they are fairly lenient to the traveller who is merely passing through the country.

The giving back of the passports is a scene full of interest, especially if you have been so fortunate as to come by one of the slower trains and there are peasants aboard. The giving up of the precious document even for a half-hour fills their souls with fear. Among the peasants, the wife is included in the husband's passport. Nowhere in Russia can a wife obtain a passport without her husband's permission. I came to regard my passport as one regards a check for baggage. If the passport was presented, I must

be forthcoming, because the government was responsible.

A rush of joyful pride welled up in my heart whenever I was ordered to show my passport. The United States wisely chooses a large sheet of foolscap for its foreign documents, and clinches the substance of the same by a big, powerful seal. The passports of the other countries are smaller.

At Alexandrovo, an official stands in the center of the room and calls out the names. He goes down the list swiftly, with an evident goal in the bottom of the page. The peasants push and struggle to reach him as soon as they hear their names,— and woe to any impeding obstacle! When it comes to foreigners, the agent whom we encountered spoke all languages impartially, and we should never have recognized our names if a kind Russian count had not stood by to assist.

Granted that you do not care to be hustled about by your fellow-man, then there is the Nord Express from Berlin to Moscow, connecting with the International train, and leaving no minutes for observation. We learned too late of a pleasant line of Finnish steamers that run be-

tween Stockholm and St. Petersburg, and which are said to be very interesting and incidentally both clean and cheap. One can also go by the Hook of Holland.

The Trans-Siberian trains leave Moscow from the Koursk station, a palatial sort of edifice, which looks like a hotel. It is far from the center of the town, and an extra hour should be allowed for reaching it, besides the time necessary to check luggage. The official in charge of the uptown office in Moscow is an efficient gentleman, speaking fluent English. As has been said, tickets must be secured well in advance.

Time was when the departure of this train was a recognized event in Russian life. Russians are akin to the rest of the world, and the importance of the event has dwindled. There was a goodly crowd when we left. The train leaves at eight, but at half past seven the platform was thronged. My ward and I had found our place and were packing up our bags, when a flood of Hungarian burst upon our ears. The porter, (who is called the conductor), touched the chef-de-train's sleeve. Behind him stood a plump, blonde girl and a young man. They all talked. The young man

flew from one end of the car to the other. He ruffled his hair and clawed at his mustache. The chef spread out both hands, invoking heaven, and the blonde girl began to cry.

Then the conductor dashed into our compartment and shouted to his chief. The whole party invaded our compartment and, with a sigh of contentment, the blonde girl dropped a hand bag upon the long-lost berth. Then she went out, to walk up and down the platform with the mustached man. He held her arm and bent over her until his head obscured her face. The five-minute bell rang. They stopped. He took both her hands and talked to her in a low voice. She cried now — perhaps because a place had been found for her on the train.

The last three minutes of the stay were given up to kissing. Men even kissed men, in the Russian way. The mustached man kissed and kissed the girl. She stood on the steps and waved her wet handkerchief until the station was but a blur in the distance. Then she came into the compartment and threw herself down in the corner.

Later, she told us her story. She had been en-

gaged to a young German, who lived in Kobe. He could not leave his business to come so far. Her father, being rich, had procured a dispensation from the Catholic Church, since there was no priest at Kobe, and she had been married by proxy at Prague. In the ceremony, the bridegroom had been represented by his brother, and the brother had accompanied her as far as Moscow.

She was very sad. Judging from appearances, marriage by proxy was not a success. For the first three days, the bride sent postal cards to the brother at every stop. She sang bits from the operas and studied English. She would say "Darling" over and over.

"'Dahlin'— c'est un mot charmant," she said.

There was a house in Kobe waiting for her, and she must speak English to the boy, "qui faisait le menage." She described her husband and after some searching found his photograph. From that moment, she sent postals to him, instead of the brother. If she had but known, it was a waste of ink. Russian mail is unbelievably slow.

We had read of the lounge and the observation

car on the International. There used to be something of this description, but the large glass windows were broken frequently, and now the observation car has disappeared. There is a small library of two or three shelves of Russian, French, English and German books and five or six periodicals, which are kept in the dining car. On some trains there are chess and checkers. The dining car is really the lounge of the train. The tables accommodate two or four; and a place having been assigned you at the beginning of the journey, you usually keep it for the rest of the time, except for breakfast, which may be taken quite where one pleases.

The whole way across the continent, a log hut marks each verst of the road. It is the duty of the occupant to hold a green flag as the train approaches, to show that the line is clear. Almost invariably, it was a woman who saluted the train; and once we had passed, she faced in the opposite direction for a minute, and then disappeared. The green flag is furled tightly, and its Carcassonne must be the dream of flapping out in the crisp air. At night, a bundled figure holds a green lantern in front of these houses. Many

times, from the rear of the train, I have seen a young girl stand listlessly, to wave us on our safe way, and then stand and stand, gazing at the flying train,— which did not stop, which hurried on to opportunity and gayety and life — and passed her by. With the irony of fate, I'd toss some bonbons or a magazine out to her. As she stooped to pick them up, we were too far away to see the longing in her eyes. There is a worn path by the side of the track, kept well footed by the station-house tender, who has to be answerable for his verst of road.

A man in railroad uniform sits on the end platform of all trains, and watches — for what?

The utter loneliness of the employees grows upon you. The railroad company has been generous in establishing schools and exercising grounds and churches at its larger stations; but there are whole days when one sees only small stations and never a town. If the railroad passes through a village, the station is often miles away, — as at Petropalovsk, for instance. It was explained that the original purpose of the road was twofold,— as a military asset in transporting soldiers, and as an encouragement to settlers, by

enabling them to reach uninhabited country. Goodness knows, there is still plenty of country left. Such loneliness is oppressive, even to see.

Recent consular reports confirm what I heard in Siberia, that the Russian government contemplates the improvement of this road by a branch from Omsk to Petersburg, by a branch south from Taiga and by the line to Pekin. When these extensions are made, the Russians will have spent over one billion dollars on the Siberian Railway. Offsetting that, they will possess a complete, double track system from the Urals to the Pacific, with double approaches, the whole measuring 6,844 miles in length. Of the Petersburg section, the line from Perm to Ekaterinburg is already finished. The double tracking was begun in 1907. It is calculated that the entire system will be completed in 1915. The Amur branch of the railroad is being pushed on account of the great fair, to be held in that section in this year.

In the first years of its running, the railroad stopped at Lake Baikal,— the "Holy Sea," as the Russians call it. The year of the war came, and the government needed to rush troops through. The ice seemed thick enough to warrant

the laying of rails over the lake. This was done, and a train filled with soldiers started across. They had gone half way, when the weight proved too much for the ice, and two companies were wiped out of existence.

The famous ice-breaking steamer "Baikal" was built by an English firm, and for a number of years passengers on leaving the train were transported slowly across this great lake in the steamer. We heard hair-raising tales of how the gigantic ship would be pushed straight into the thick blocks of impeding ice, and mounting on them tear them asunder by the sheer force of her weight. Those days come not back, except when there is a washout on the track. Now the train skirts the border of the lake. The displaced steamer was moored in the distance, an inoffensive object.

Baikal is a name to conjure with in Siberia. Each inch of the shore has its bit of legend. The capes are named for fishes or animals. At the point where the Angara River flows out, there is a submerged cliff, which is considered both by the Shamans and by the Lamas to be the habitation of the invincible White God. The Buriats

and Zamas believe that the Spirit of
on the island of Olkhon. Sacrifices are
in both places,—there's nothing like
sure.

The precipitous cliffs which rise at intervals along the borders of the lake have queer outlines. Two of them look exactly like a human face in profile.

The unsteady waters make a storm especially feared. The waves easily reach a height of twelve feet. The lake contains a peculiar variety of seal, which is said to be related to the Phoca annulata. Of late years these seals have not been so plentiful, and the government is trying to establish a close season.

Going out, we had passed Lake Baikal in the daytime. The low September sun glinted across the water; the shores were ablaze with crimson and yellow. It sometimes seems as if Nature carried the law of compensation into the realm of beauty. Where the winter is coldest, Nature lavishes her care upon the fall. Whatever snow may come to blot out the landscape, the remembering eye has but to look back and the colors of the gleaming autumn are there again. There is

not a bare bough on the wide horizon,— just color, color, everywhere.

It was very beautiful. The grass which keeps the living green of the summer longest was turning brown in places. Here and there were patches of red along the ground. The mountains on the other side of Lake Baikal were covered with snow in September, and at evening, when the red sun slid into the water, the white mountain tops were flushed with pain, because it was the end of the day, and winter was just around the corner.

At the eastern end of the lake, the railroad winds through about 81 tunnels. It seems as if the circuitous route taken were quite unnecessary, considering the grade, which is not steep.

With the exception of our own Great Lakes and Victoria Nyanza in Africa, Baikal is the largest body of fresh water in the world. It is as long as England, and in some places the water is over a mile deep. Lake Baikal is a part of the vast system of inland navigation which honeycombs Siberia. The extent of inland waterways is over 15,000 miles, which should be most favorable to the commercial development of the country.

Is there something that I should have put down — something that you, coming after, may wish to know? As I think back, the list of questions we would have asked was long, and there were so many of them unanswered when we had consulted the few available books.

The Trans-Siberian railroad, either the International train or the Russian State Express, is comfortable and pleasant. The time of year adds to or subtracts from one's happiness. June and September are supposed to be the best months. And if you fall on another? That may be best for you.

CHAPTER XIII

A SIBERIAN COUNTESS

SNOW brings an opaque sensation of its own. I was dimly conscious of that feeling before I was thoroughly awake. How dark it was! The central light of the compartment is not put out on the Russian State; it burns tranquilly on through the night. The management furnishes a hood, in two sections, which draws over the globe, if the passengers agree. I had agreed with myself that the hood should be drawn. I stood on the edge of the seat and pushed the two sides of the hood together. They naturally sprang apart, and that little chink of electric light did its best to keep me awake. Though the outcome was dubious for a while, it was unsuccessful in the end.

The light had been turned out now, and the snow, piling up against the window, kept out the day. My watch said nine o'clock. Time on the Trans-Siberian is a joke. In the dining car

are two clocks, one of which is kept according to St. Petersburg time, the other according to local time. The timetable follows Petersburg time; and as for the poor passengers they take their choice, which is wide, for there is a varying difference of from one to seven hours.

This train was decidedly smaller than the International. One welcome change was that, although I was still travelling second class, there was a basin with running water in my compartment. Another pleasure was in finding a good-sized mirror in the door, while on the other train the mirror had been a little affair, perched high, so that when the beds were made it was available only for the person who had the upper berth. The sheets were spotless, and the train was very clean.

Stepping into the dining car was a pleasant passing from the icy corridor. The warm place gave one such a sense of security from the blinding storm outside. The snow fell in slanting lines against the window.

This was the country of Jermak. He had lived "on the royal road of the Volga," and history has it that he lived well. When the day of

reckoning came, and the Czar's soldiers lined up against the outlaws, Jermak so won the admiration of his enemies that his life was spared and he was taken to Petersburg. Ivan the Terrible and Jermak looked each other in the eye, and knew that they were comrades. Jermak was made the head of a band of Russians, Tartars, Cossacks and Poles, who crossed the Urals and captured Siberia. Ivan was so pleased with his new possession that he gave Jermak a cuirass of exquisite workmanship. Armed with the royal gift, Jermak again entered Siberia. His troops were attacked near Irkutsk, and, in trying to swim the Irtysh, he was weighed down by his cuirass and drowned. Time passed,— much was added, much forgotten,— and Jermak was made a saint by the Orthodox Church. Doubtless he deserved it more than the rest of us. Wayfaring in this country requires a steady pulse and a clear head.

Oh! This Russian language! I had ordered my breakfast in Russian for a month, and here I was in difficulties again.

"Preenesee'te yeshcho' sleef'kee."

The "sleef'kee" meant cream. Long ago it

had been established that sweet cream was out of the question. It was possible to have slightly turned whipped cream for coffee; and although it is an acquired taste, once mastered it has a wholly individual charm.

There was a woman in the dining car, a fine-faced, gray-haired woman, sitting rather near. Either German or Russian, evidently. She was plump; looking at her again, it seemed certain that she was Russian. She came to my assistance. We conversed in French. She lived in Irkutsk and was taking her daughter away to be finished. The daughter was "tellement gaie," that "elle plaisait à tous." At the moment she was talking to the world in another car. She was not sorry to be going away. Irkutsk was not bad, but in winter the cold was 50 degrees below zero. The snow never melted. Besides, it was too gay for a young girl. There was so much drinking. Chaperons? Oh, no! Siberia was very free. Young girls went alone with officers to the Club? Yes. You couldn't keep a young girl of eighteen from having some pleasure. The only way was to take her out of Irkutsk before Irkutsk could harm her. Yes, there

were dances. Her daughter never went. She could not let her. There were very good schools in Irkutsk. Everybody, nearly everybody, went to school; not the peasants, of course. Girls were not married young. Many were not married at all. The young men did not want to assume new responsibilities. Oh, no! A girl stood small chance of marrying in Irkutsk.

My breath came in gasps. Was Madame describing America or Siberia?

Later I met the daughter. She was a sweet, unspoiled girl. An Englishman from Japan and a German baron were her devoted slaves. At a station, it was close work to see which would walk with her. They would neither of them share.

The steps of the Russian trains are high. If one helped her down the other was waiting on the platform to walk with her.

The Irkutsk friends had sent them fruit and bonbons, and the young men were regaled in turn. The mother took no interest in the proceedings. That evening she sat in my compartment until eleven oclock. The girl got out at a station and had a snowball fight with her two

cavaliers; then sat talking to them in her compartment until her mother's return. The porter had made up the beds while we were at dinner, but neither the girl nor her mother seemed to mind that.

We played bridge the next day, the German taking it rather seriously, the girl not knowing how. They told me many tales about being snowed in along the line.

"If you stop, you won't get away until spring," the German baron said.

Meanwhile, the train lumbered on, across the bridge over the Oka, which is 1,560 feet long,—over the Birjussa to Krasnoyarsk. It's worth travelling to Russia just to hear a native pronounce that word. Krasnoyarsk is a typical Siberian city, with pretentious buildings crowding log cabins and many-towered churches everywhere. It is the capital of the province of Yeniseisk and is situated on the banks of the Yenisei River, the largest river of Asia. As we crossed the bridge over the river, the world looked mystical and fairy-like. The snow had ceased falling. The steep, snow-covered banks of the river were gray-white, the river itself was

a gray-green, and the huddled city beyond was of the same quiet tone.

However, Krasnoyarsk is not considered quiet. It is the radiating point for much commerce.

The Irkutsk countess persisted in advising me to stick to the train. I disliked the idea of parting from the jolly group, and, besides, I wanted to see which man would win. They were most concerned about the game of bridge. Five days more on the train, and no bridge! We entered into a contract that if there was no one to meet me at the station at Taiga, I was not to stop. I subscribed to this contract willingly enough, for I felt sure that the President of the University would be there.

We played until the Taiga station bell rang. Such an ado as there was, to hustle into our wraps and corral my luggage. The luggage was under a ban. They would not allow the porter to carry it off until they had seen the President with their own eyes. Outside, it was snowing again. Very few people were getting off. We no sooner reached the platform than the countess was for going back. I looked everywhere, but could see no one whom I knew.

"Back we go. Back we go." The German baron stood at the steps to help us in.

With a twenty minutes' wait, I didn't propose to give up so easily. We'd look again. Sure enough, through the snowflakes came the hurrying figure of the President, six feet three and weighing about 200 pounds. It did my heart good to see a face that I had seen before and which I could trust. There was a great shaking of hands and speaking of various languages as the President was presented to the others.

The Irkutsk countess had given me letters to some people whom she knew at Tomsk, and she and the President were talking the matter over. The baron and the Englishman were snowballing each other, using the bulky figures of the President and the countess as a screen. The President stepped to one side to get in the lee of the storm.

Whizz! One of the Englishman's snowballs hit the President squarely in the back of the neck. Cap off, the Englishman begged for pardon and shook what snow he could from his victim.

Three bells! The men boosted the countess

on — the rest jumped aboard — and the train was off.

Is there anything more consoling than a friend? It was peaceful happiness to be beside the President.

CHAPTER XIV

HOME LIFE

TOMSK is one of the many examples of towns through which the Trans-Siberian railroad does not pass. It is situated just sixty miles to the north and is reached by a branch line. The traveller changes cars at Taiga. We walked up the white steps to the elaborate station. It was built in a wilderness of forest, but the mighty magnet of the rails has brought a village to cluster about the station. The clean-paved floor of the corridor was white, even in this storm. All stations have icons. This one had a real altar, opposite the news-stand. Ordinarily, the icon is in one end of the waiting-room or restaurant, and the bar at the other end. It is a convenient location. The entering Russian crosses himself — then proceeds to consume vodka.

We were drinking that other Russian liquid, tea, and tasting the large, dark-colored maca-

roons, which are delicious. The President wanted to hear all about the wedding and my journey. We had an hour to wait. The storm was shut out by the electric lights of the station. The long talk seemed almost home-like. The feeling of being alone dropped from me like a garment.

"You'll be astonished at this train," the President said. "It's a branch road and it isn't like the International."

On account of the insistence of my host, I was trying to walk in his rubbers. Going down the steps and making connection with the rubbers couldn't be done on the same trip. The reluctant President carried the rubbers, and we reached the toy train. It had not bothered to back up to the station,— which is a characteristic of Russian trains. For a person of my height, the only feasible way of mounting the exceedingly high steps was a running jump or putting my knee up. The dim light in the tiny compartment came from a candle enclosed in a lantern; and there was a curtain, which could shut off even that, for the travelling Russian is really interested in but two things, sleeping and

eating. Both the Express and this train had wooden storm guards for the windows, much like the cinder guards of our Pullmans. In spite of this, the storm and hail beat against the window.

We would creep up to a station and stay there for a while,— then creep on. To show that nations have the same customs, the conductor came to look at our tickets three times during the trip.

Afterwards, it developed that it took two hours for the journey. We had so much to say that we were not aware for some time of an insistent noise — a queer, penetrating burr-r, like the roar of Shere Khan. The President was noticing it. We were in the first class, and the Irkutsk countess had told me that on the smaller trains one usually travelled second class, because it was considered safer. "Buzz-z — whirr-r!" The President went into the corridor to see what the disturbance was. He beckoned me to come. A brakeman of some six feet was doubled up on a corridor seat. His legs projected toward the middle of the car and his arms filled most of the side space, so that

his head was forced down upon his breast. He slept and snored from Taiga to Tomsk.

There were many droshkies outside the Tomsk station. They made no importunities. It was the President who went down the steps and selected two, putting me in one and himself and the luggage in the other. We started off at a good pace. The ground was white; the laden branches of the trees took queer shapes in the distance. The road rose and fell in unequal intervals, and I rolled from one side of my droshky to the other. I grabbed my muff and my umbrella in my left hand and held on to the wagon with my right. How we did go! Once we struck off across a field, where there was no road. The light snow made all the world seem like a meadow. Another droshky passed so near that we dug one wheel into the ditch at the side of the road, while I balanced on the step and stuck my head out over the side, hoping that the fur on my hat might be the fraction needed to keep us from going over. When we had righted again, and I had taken stock of my possessions, the izvostchik was whipping his horse mightily. I rose to my feet to interfere. A sudden lurch

set me down forcefully. I stayed there. This Siberian trip wasn't to reform the cabmen; besides, we might lose sight of the President's droshky,— we might tip over in the snow and not be found. With a shudder I concluded that the poor horse must stand the beating.

We drew up at a large white building. There were children standing about the door. In a twinkling, they had my luggage, and we were mounting the cement stairs to an apartment on the first floor. The door was opened by a little maid in a large apron, who ushered us into the long, narrow hall, with rooms opening off each side. Madame Presidente bustled up and gathered me into her motherly arms. I shook hands with the five children, strong, fine-faced youngsters.

At last here was a real home, a place where there were children. Madame hurried off to see about supper. The children and I entered the salon, a beautiful, big room, very simply furnished. A grand piano was at the far end. The other furniture consisted of a bent-wood chair and seven or eight dining-room chairs and a table. The floor was waxed. The walls were

ner of speaking French. When they wish to offer you a cup of tea, or a bonbon, they say, "Puis-je vous presenter?" They also use "masse de" for "beaucoup de." However, they speak good French except for a certain harshness of accent. English is fashionable in Russia at present, and the young people are being taught that language in preference to all others. First and last, I met many who spoke English, mostly men, however.

After an hour in the drawing-room, Madame asked me if I would have a bath. I was ready for anything. The Russians, throughout the country, have a little, separate log house, consecrated to the bath. They touch water seldom, but when they do, they're thorough. There is a pile of huge stones in the center of the hut. A fire is built in the middle of the pile. Water is heated and the person is washed. Then cold water is dashed over the heated stones, until the place is filled with steam. If the bather is not yet satisfied, he climbs upon some bars, placed directly over the stones. The steam rises in great volumes and the bather has a taste of purgatory. An attendant accompanies each bath

and whacks the bather with a cold or hot towel, or perhaps uses a birch stick.

In the remote towns no great distinction is made in the bath houses. The peasants bathe together,— men and women; for the primitive Russians seem to be entirely without the sense of shame, like healthy animals.

I had heard of these baths, but had not met them.

Madame, accompanied by the four children who were still up, and by a maid, led the way to a real, regular, bona-fide, modern bathroom. The immense zinc tub was connected by pipes with an iron stove, exactly as the bathrooms in our French château are arranged. The children retired. Madame and the maid remained. Madame put out the warm towels, such nice, big ones, and went, wishing me a pleasant bath. The maid filled the tub nearly full of warm water. I was practically ready for the plunge. Still the maid stayed.

I said, "Blaghahdaryoovas."

She stood at attention. I smiled and waved my hand toward the door. Russians are not quick. At last I opened the door and held it,

She took the hint. Madame appeared, to know if I wouldn't have Nina rub my back. The bath was one to be remembered.

Back in the good-sized chamber, I crawled into the clean bed. The upper sheet was buttoned over a down comforter and there was a blue lining to the embroidered pillow-case. An icon hung over the bed. It was a pleasant room in which to fall asleep.

Breakfast was put on the table in the bright copper dishes in which it was cooked. There was fruit, oatmeal, tea, chocolate, hot milk, bread, butter and cheese, the whole served as one course. Russian melons are a delectable morsel. Watermelons are ripe in October but they are not as sweet as the oval yellow melons.

It is a national custom to have meals whenever it is convenient. There are no special hours. Dinner is at four today and at six tomorrow. I'm not sure but that it is as rational a method as any. One eats when one is hungry. I fail to see, however, how the housekeeper can manage it.

Madame said there was always tea at ten and at four. Really there was tea all the time,—

before one went anywhere and as soon as one returned. The samovar was always hot. Madame allowed me to come into the dining-room early one morning, to watch the maid start the samovar for the day. It had been cleaned and polished. After a final rinse, cold water was poured into the space that surrounded the chimney. Burning charcoal was dropped through this funnel into the fire-pot at the base. The draft is furnished by means of open metal work at the bottom. It takes ten minutes for the water to boil; and once started the samovar is not allowed to go out for the day. It requires very little charcoal.

CHAPTER XV

TOMSK AND ITS UNIVERSITY

"THERE is one thing to be done first," the President said at breakfast. "You must have some rubbers."

It was a beautiful morning, cold and clear. Our droshky sank deep into the mud. What streets! We were passing the University buildings, and I was much impressed by the size of this only University in Siberia,— still, *nechivo*, we were out on other business. The droshky drew up in a small lake at the edge of the sidewalk. Plump! And we were on dry land. This was a well-equipped shoe-shop, and I failed to see the cause of Madame's long conversation with one clerk after another. She turned to me.

"You wear a number three shoe, you see, and they're not sure whether they have any as small as that."

"As small as a three?"

"In the winter, our women have to wear woolen stockings and fur-lined shoes, so, by the time it comes to the rubbers, one must have a large size," Madame said.

After some hunting, I was fitted out with a pair of heavy, lined goloshes, which made my feet feel like lead.

We were starting on a round of visits to the elementary schools for boys and for girls. These schools, which are called "public," require a small tuition fee. The work corresponded fairly to the work done in the same grades in America. The number of subjects covered is smaller.

Madame told me that the mothers were asked to interest themselves in the schools. "They don't do it much yet," she added. Another point of similarity between Siberia and America.

The eye was struck by the Siberian type of girl; the national traits seemed more pronounced in the female than in the male. These girls were short, with brown hair and gray eyes, high cheek bones and colorless skins. Occasionally, there was a radiant, red-haired maiden,

with a milky skin, and I felt as if I must follow her from class to class.

At the new Women's Medical College, which has recently been started in a ramshackle old building, the girls were wearing artistic reform clothes. We arrived at this college at about half past ten, and the woman dean had not yet come. We met her afterwards,— a stout, keen-faced, energetic woman, whose husband is also a professor.

After luncheon, the President took his turn at showing the sights of Tomsk to an inquisitive stranger. We visited the University library, which would do credit to a much older and larger institution. The librarian was a bewhiskered book enthusiast. Two attendants went about with us, and it was a pleasure to see the librarian take the books from their unholy hands. His white fingers guarded the precious folios as if they were gold.

There are now about 4,000 students in all the departments of the University, and everywhere there is a freshness, an earnest love of work, that grows upon you. Students in Russia are carefully watched. They are regarded as a hot-

bed of political unrest. They also have no enviable reputation for moral poise,— but they work. There is no dilettantism in the University of Tomsk.

The Botanical Gardens and Greenhouses were last on the afternoon's program. A former president — rector, as they say — of the University is at the head of the department of Botany. He was a cultivated cosmopolitan, who brought out for our inspection the many species of edelweiss that he had collected in the Urals the past summer.

It was already six, and Madame had warned us to be at home in time for the supper that she was giving. She was in the dining-room, patting a plate or straightening a knife.

"Madame, what shall I wear?"

"The dress you have on," Madame said, coming towards me. She touched the fur border. "It's the latest Paris fashion, isn't it?"

Why should I make her joys any less by telling her that the gown was made in America? Nechivo.

I did change to an afternoon gown, but, as Madame said, it was quite unnecessary. Only

one woman, who had recently moved to Siberia from Switzerland, wore anything but a street dress.

There were two maids in the house, a cook and a waitress. A professional cook had been hired for the day. The mistress laid the table, with the help of her sixteen-year-old daughter. The three maids darted in and out. The hors d'euvres were placed on the table,— ripe olives, various vegetable salads, little croquettes and every known sort of tinned fish.

The guests were University people, cultivated, quiet, delightful, the same that one would meet in any college town in America.

Supper lasted long. It began with a sort of red vodka, which tasted of the cranberries, from which it is partly made. There were five or six other kinds of wine, placed upon the table in tall bottles and duplicated at each end of the board. To my surprise, there was little wine consumed. I asked my host if the educated people in Siberia didn't drink.

"Some do and some do not. Mostly, they do," he said. "The physicians say it isn't good for us."

That answer was given to so many questions. Food hygiene has evidently taken a strong hold on the people.

To return to the menu: there was caviar of course, and such delicious caviar! The soup was a clear bouillon, with a large piece of boiled sterlet in each plate. This is a national dish, and is made from a receipt that is handed down from mother to daughter. Whenever it is possible, the fish must be alive as it is plunged into water that is pleasantly warm to the hand. Then the ingredients are added, and the soup is carefully watched; the scum being stirred in as often as it rises. If the scum is skimmed off, the soup becomes flavorless. Roasted tetjeroff or grouse, with beets and potatoes, came next. I have never tasted such game as is served in Siberia, not only in private houses but in hotels and on the dining cars.

As a delicate compliment to the American guest, the dessert was ice-cream,—"long may it wave in the land of the free and the home of the brave."

Two of the gentlemen at this dinner announced that they had dined at four, so they took only

dessert. Russian men do not share the English disdain of sweets.

After the dinner, all the company, ladies and gentlemen, went into the salon. They taught me a most intricate game, somewhat like whist, but long and slow. The children went about from group to group, gaily but noiselessly.

Fruit, nuts, cakes and bonbons were brought into the salon and placed on a center table. In about an hour the hostess asked us to have a cup of tea. For this we again went to the dining-room, where the table had been reset with wines, tea, fruit, bread, cheese, nuts, cakes and bonbons. Everyone drank tea, taking it in the Russian way, in glasses, with a slice of lemon. On our return to the salon, we stayed there until the end of the evening, at twelve o'clock.

Two of the ladies went home to put their children to bed, one of them returning later. Contrary to what I had noticed at Irkutsk, there was the greatest sympathy between husbands and wives, a live sort of affection. My pictures were brought out and shown to the company. It made the cockles of my heart warm, when one of the company said:

"Are all American children as beautiful as this?"

"Well, now!" her husband remarked. "I like that. "It sounds as if Russian children were homely. How about our small boy?"

It was at this dinner that I was recommended to take a trip through Siberia by water. One can leave Lake Baikal by way of the Angara river, then to the Yenisei and so to the Kass river, by canal to the Ket, to the Obi, Irtysh and Tobol, until one reaches the Ural mountains. The same man who advised this also spoke with enthusiasm of a trip from Tomsk. One goes up the Tom river to Tiumen, in the Urals; by rail to Perm, then by steamer on the Kama river to the Volga, and on as far as one chooses.

When the guests were all deposited in their carriages, Madame bolted the outer door. Even in the daytime there was a burglar chain on it. Like all well regulated households, the family had a night watchman.

"Now," Madame's hospitable voice said, "let's have a cup of tea."

We were up early, and ready for a tour of more schools. First, the President took me

through the School of Mining Engineering in the School of Technology. The building is a fine new one and, like most of the others, contains the apartments in which the professors live. In the case of scientific work, the President said that this was found to be a great convenience. If the professor wishes to look after any research which he is conducting, he has only to go from his own apartment into a hall, and immediately he is in the section devoted to his department.

The Mining lecture rooms are fitted with lanterns and screens, the students sitting as in an amphitheater. The private rooms of the professors are very large, a marked contrast to those in some American universities. A janitor has charge of each floor, and a small, bad-smelling room is given over to his use. We saw one janitor who was making the tea for his breakfast.

There is a good mineralogical library, with a preponderance of American books. The models of mines, shafts and safety devices for cages were interesting. Tomsk is in the midst of mineral wealth. To the south are the Altai moun-

tains, whose very name means gold. It seems to be the general opinion that in comparison with Siberia the Transvaal is poor in gold. There is much silver also.

We drove out of town for a distance, through such mud and such small rivers as my eyes had not seen before. The West has nothing like it. The droshky careened about until it could bend no farther, then righted itself to take another plunge. At the end of the tossing and rolling was a stretch of gray river, and the dim city lying beyond it in a fog. On the way back to town we passed the city playground. It was opened last year by a fête.

The director of the Medical School had asked us to come at ten o'clock. The waiting room had a group of patients huddled in one corner; convalescents, evidently. They were wrapped in gray flannel and their heads were covered by an immaculate white cloth. One woman had wound an orange cotton scarf about her throat. That bit of color stood out like sunshine in the gray room.

The day had grown stormy; sometimes it rained, sometimes it snowed. The depth and the

thickness of the mud increased. Winter was upon the country. According to one of the members of the Royal Geographical Society, Central Siberia is the coldest recorded place in the world. Eighty degrees below zero has been registered. At Tomsk, 50° below is called cold. In summer, the days are very hot, but the nights are cool.

Two physicians conducted us over the hospital, the equipment of which was entirely modern, but meager. The same antiseptic smells, the same immaculateness that reigns in all hospitals, were here. The nurses were larger and older, and — may I say it? — not so pretty as those to whom we are accustomed.

On our way to the Manual Training School, we passed the dome-shaped tomb of Theodore Kusmitsch, Tomsk's mythical saint. Men were walking past the door, hats off, the rain matting their long hair. Years before, a tramp had come to Tomsk and had camped outside the town, entering the streets only to go to church or to do some kindly deed. A merchant gave him a hut and he lived in it until he died. Gradually the people came to believe that the tramp was Alexander I., who had abdicated the throne because

he was powerless to carry out his wishes for the uplift of the people. Alexander had gone to the Crimea for his health, and it was said that he died there. Instead, he became a wanderer, as every Russian is, at heart.

In front of the Manual Training School, the river that had to be jumped in getting out of the droshky was small, and we entered the building in high spirits. As usual, our wraps and rubbers were checked, and the President sent in his card to the principal. One evidently asked for permission to enter any school. I noticed that the President had telephoned in advance to each school.

A recent graduate from St. Petersburg took us through the building. We were not permitted to enter the class-rooms if a lesson was being given. In one room the students were drawing designs. I looked in through the glass frames of the door. Not an eye was raised. That is true study, when a class is so interested in its work that even an American woman — American women are scarcer than hen's teeth in Siberia — does not disturb anyone.

An interesting item of the curriculum is danc-

ing, which is taught to both girls and boys of all grades, until they reach the University. With such early training, it is not hard to see why Russian dancers lead the world.

In this Manual Training School, as in all others that I saw, there was a central corridor, which was used by the pupils during the recess. An occasional bench ran along the side of the corridor. The walls were covered with botanical and zoological charts, and an icon clung to the ceiling in the "front" corner.

The Petersburg student led us to his own domain, an agricultural laboratory. They say that Russians are not born farmers. The government is surely taking the right course when it introduces agriculture into the secondary schools.

We had come back to the inevitable racks. One's clothes would be half worn out by taking them off and putting them on so often. That must be one reason why the rubbers are made of such wear-resisting thickness.

We were headed for the People's University, at the extreme limit of the city. It isn't my affiair, but I wondered why a school whose sessions were only at night should be so far from

town. The next wonderment was why I should have fancied that it mattered. The kind of people who seek an education at night schools mind neither distance nor mud. This school building was given by Mr. Makoushin, a bookseller of Tomsk. It is spacious and very light. It is the only school which contains a large assembly room. Altogether, it was so modern in equipment, so up-to-date in purpose, that my nostrils were filled with snow, as I tried to get my breath when we were once more out-doors.

We had been asked to call upon Mr. Makoushin. There was time for but one more venture, and the question was whether we should call upon him or upon the lady to whom the Irkutsk countess had given me a letter. The lady had said over the telephone that she would be at home all day; and now, when we told her that the lack of time prevented our coming, she replied that the countess' friends were her friends and that I would always be a welcome visitor in her house. This was a good example of Siberian hospitality.

We passed the hotel which, after the fashion of the country, is the leading café chantant of the

city. It was established by a man who had been exiled from Petersburg, because he had grown too rich by lending money, which is against the law. The leading contractor is an exiled murderer. In Siberian towns such exiles are not necessarily under a ban.

Tomsk has a market-place, where all sorts of possible and impossible things are offered for sale. Here, as in the other large towns, the main street has benches. A few beggars were sitting there, even on such a day as this. A man was pointed out who lived in town but still kept his land in the country commons and was registered as a peasant. Everyone must be registered as belonging to some social caste. Siberia is a free and easy land, where social distinctions play no large part; still, I noticed on one train that the son of the governor of a province did not speak to another passenger from the same town, although they had known each other casually for years.

We stopped at Mr. Makoushin's bookshop, a large store, which is doing a thriving business, as is his shop in Irkutsk. Around the corner from the shop was the house in which the pro-

prietor lived. We rang. A small, oblong window in the door had a wooden cover. The one answering the bell could look out before the door was opened. We were still in Siberia. I hoped the maid would be a cautious one.

It didn't happen so. The door opened without any premonitory symptoms. A bonne, in a white apron, much too long, ushered us into a small salon. Of course, we took off our rubbers and coats in the hall. The room which we entered was somewhat different from any other that I saw in Siberia. It was European — more German than Russian. There were slimsy lace curtains, upholstered furniture and a plush table-cover.

The middle-aged daughter received us. She teaches in the school, and for that reason had not come to the supper the evening before. She went to see if her father was at liberty. When the door opened and he came in, the room lost all its pettiness. He was tall and thin, with the high cheek-bones of the Russian. His eyes, which were small and bright, were shrewd, until he smiled. He stroked his spare, gray beard in a leisurely fashion.

We told him what a pleasure it had been to see so beautiful a building.

"I'm glad it pleased you, and glad that it was so nearly completed when you arrived. If we are fortunate with the Minister of Education, it will soon be open. America points the way in education. We follow. I suppose your school buildings are very beautiful."

I replied that America was proud if she had been of the slightest inspiration in this building. I told him that some of the schoolhouses were large. No, I did not add that a roving eye would detect any number of ramshackle buildings that are glorified by the name of schoolhouses.

"The people in Siberia want education, and every year we have more scholars."

"Yes," the President added, "the 1912 budget at Petersburg provided for an expenditure of $55,000,000 for educational purposes, and the local governments contribute nearly as much again."

On the trains and in the towns, I heard much of the People's Universities which are established in the larger cities. They are supported from

Magistratskaya, the main street of Tomsk

People's Institute—Tomsk

private purses, although they come under the direction of the Minister of Education. If he chances to be liberal, it is easy to establish a new University. If he is not liberal, the objections that he can raise in such a case are insurmountable.

In 1910, it was found that the most famous professors in the Imperial University of Moscow were liberals. They were forced to resign. A committee of merchants raised the money necessary for their salaries, and they either entered the People's University, or engaged in research work.

Mr. Makoushin sent his greetings to the American schools. "We're trying," he said, "we're trying."

What can Siberia not accomplish, when her citizens stand ready to help, with such a spirit as that?

CHAPTER XVI

OVER THE URALS

THE streets were full of students as we drove back. The student, together with most adult Russians, wears a uniform. The professors wear a uniform. The boys in the lower schools wear one. Not to wear some kind of regalia sets one out from the crowd in a most conspicuous manner.

Madame and luncheon had been waiting some time. My duds were hustled into the suitcases. The President cashed some checks,— last and final reach of courtesy. We sat down all together for our parting meal. We drank to the journey, to their year, to Siberia.

The lad of twelve, whom I especially liked, half rose in his place. His courage waned. The second time, he found his feet, and said, in slow French, "À votre santé, Madame."

I loved him for it. A strange language, and

all attention upon him. I knew well enough how difficult it must have been.

In the early days in Siberia, it was the practice to drink a stirrup-cup before the traveller mounted his horse. When the time had come when the President was to mount the platform on which he was to lecture, we drank a stirrup-cup.

We shook hands and wished each other "God's speed towards good." The children brought me presents to carry to America. Madame and the oldest son, Leo, were to take me to Taiga. What mud there was! Madame was not svelte, and we were a tight fit in the droshky. At any rate, we kept each other in.

The danger of being thrown out has determined the prevailing usage. By this time I understood the Siberian method of riding in a droshky. If a gentleman escorts a lady, it is his task to hold her in the carriage — not an easy occupation. He accomplishes it by putting his arm around her waist. A man who fails to do this is considered lacking in courtesy. When one has become acquainted with the custom, it seems entirely sensible and comfortable, but it

takes time to get used to settling back into a stranger's arms.

An American, who had lived in Russia and whom we met in China, told us that he was driving with a woman physician, a Russian, middle-aged and of the rotund, Russian type. He knew nothing about holding her in, and they thrashed around inside that 3 by 5 droshky until the woman turned angrily toward him.

"Have you been brought up in the backwoods, that you don't know enough to hold me in this droshky?" she said.

He immediately put his arm about her waist, as far as it would go, and held on hard.

The landscape from Tomsk to Taiga was a miserable succession of birch forests, bleak and snow-covered. The peasants clear the taiga by burning the forest and then plowing the land between the stumps. Leo showed us the little village where their family sometimes spent the summer.

The Russian State train was two hours late. Naturally, we had tea at the long, central table. At the other end, five or six officers were drinking. A commercial traveller seized the moment

to regale himself with a dinner, which, for variety and inclusiveness challenged comparison.

Of a sudden, we remembered that my ticket must be viséd. I dove into my hand bag and dragged out the letter that Monsieur le Chef had written to the Taiga station master. Madame presented it to the major-domo, who rings the bell just before the train starts, and walks up and down the main corridor when he is not ringing the bell. The major-domo slowly read the paper. He disappeared through a door. In a few minutes, he came back to us, his cap in his hand.

He and Madame conversed. I could only gather that we were going somewhere. I stood up. We went through the third class waiting-room. There was a great crowd of people. They sat on benches,— but often they sat on their bumpy luggage.

In the third class in Russia one never sees a valise or bag. The bundles were tied up in sacking or in cloth and they were too large to enter the narrow doors of the cars. In consequence, it was more or less a vaudeville to see a car fill up. We frequently had that joy at stations.

Each passenger has from one to five of these huge bundles. A tea-kettle is tied to one. They boost them up to the steep little steps and wedge them into the door. Then, I think, they swear. No one can come in or go out. The crowd must help push the mass through the door in sheer self-defense.

Two women lay at full length over their rounded possessions. They slept. Children were darting about. The boys wanted to get into the long corridor and slide on the wet marble floor. Sometimes they managed it, but the corridor was first class territory and the major-domo chased them off. I bought him off once and the bright-eyed lads had five minutes of undisturbed fun.

There were two great reservoirs full of boiling water —"Keep-a-tok"— a word which one sees everywhere. There is no end to the amount of tea that a Russian can hold. His interior capacity is remarkable in every way. It was very hot in this third class waiting-room. The bundles had been wet with the snow and a foul steam rose from them. Instead of the long table, which is found in the first class waiting-rooms,

there was a counter, where miniature apples and pears and much drink were sold.

The procession had gotten ahead of me, because there were all of these interesting things to see, so I found them patiently waiting in what seemed to be the station-master's office. There were many train-men standing about. When I arrived, the major-domo produced the letter. The station-master read it. He took off his cap. That was a remarkable letter in its effect on caps. We came back through the third class waiting-room to the regular ticket office. It was not open. We took some tea, and the boys had another slide, which they shared with a little girl. Some officers at the end of the table were drinking more than was good for them.

The ticket for my reservation was bought just as the train came in. Madame had been telling me of her hopes for the children. She was such a good mother,—such an intelligent woman. She was bringing up her family conscientiously. It will be a long while before I shall enjoy a visit as much as I did that one. We kissed each other in the solemn Russian way, on both cheeks and the forehead. We said to each other that

we should meet again. I stood on the platform and waved as far as I could see their figures in the snow.

I went back into the compartment. Like all the Russian trains, it was a little narrower than the wagon-lits, but so comfortable. There were two good electric lights, one a reading lamp. I had promised Madame to take some supper from the large basket which she had insisted on putting up. It was tied in a clean white cloth. You'd have thought I was Russian indeed. I rang for a bottle of Harsan water and feasted royally on bread and cheese and a roasted pheasant, with a delectable Siberian apple for dessert. There was so much left. The birds and the butter would never keep in that warm compartment. The porter grinned all over his stolid face when I presented the mass to him. The fruit and the bonbons I saved for future emergencies.

Russians do not smile readily. They are not gay,— perhaps there's a reason. Leo had asked Madame if all Americans sang and laughed as I did,— if everybody laughed in America.

America, my America! I took out the old

September letters and re-read them. Old letters are just as good as any. They bring you the same message of love every time you open them. There had not been time to receive letters in China,— but there would be some in Moscow, and Moscow came next. I realized for the first time that the train went slowly.

It was a night of dreams. I dreamed of home and Tomsk and Paris. A railroad connected New York and Paris, and I was upon it. We had nearly reached New York — and my eyes opened on Siberia,— but such a changed Siberia! I rubbed my eyes. Was I dreaming still?

Miracles of miracles! Winter had passed in the night, and we were back again in the beauty of the fall. There was no snow; the brilliant sun shone through the red and yellow birches. The biting cold had gone out of the air and only an exhilarating snap remained. What happiness to wake on such a morning!

Sometimes one is a saint; all the holy impulses of humanity are snug in one's heart. Then again it's different. This morning I cared not whether I was a saint or a sinner. I was simply happy.

On the way to the dining car I was afraid to look at anyone, lest they should guess the great joy that possessed me. Well-bred Anglo-Saxon ladies ought not to be so happy, simply because the winter storm is past and they are on the way Home.

By this time, I could order breakfast very tidily, sour cream and all. There were no surplus words, except "Bootte tak dabry" (Have the goodness). I read, as usual, but I wasn't oblivious of the fact that I was the only woman in the car.

Nechivo. I mustn't mind.

A Person was making himself very conspicuous.— I drank and ate French. N'allez pas croire — swallow of coffee — que j'attache — take butter — trop d'importance aux misères inévitables — put it on the bread. I wondered if there wasn't another woman in the whole train. A certain amount of staring one doesn't notice, — but this was too much; there was not a soul to speak to, and Moscow four days away.

Going back through the cars, the Person kept close behind. I saw a woman or two, but they were Russian; suppose they spoke only Russian?

My vocabulary had painfully climbed to fifty words. What can one say with fifty words?

The compartment had not been made up. I rang. The Person was instantly at the door, to ask if he could find the conductor.

I wrote diligently all day, and didn't even have the coveted promenades at the stations, the Person was so objectionable. He spent the day in the door of my compartment. Nothing disconcerted him.

It looked as if I should need assistance. In the same car were a Russian cavalry officer and his wife. Madame was not well, but her face was kind. The Tomsk apples and bonbons opened the acquaintance, and — joy of joys! — she spoke French. Madame allowed me to walk with her at the stations, and matters mended.

We had left the plains now and were mounting the steppe again. Omsk, with its busy station, sang in my ear as we passed. It is the capital of the Siberian Cossacks. It was here that Dostoyevsky wrote "Memoirs from a Dead House." The expurgated translation makes your blood run cold. I met a man who had known the author. Dostoyevsky was a leader

among the exiles and he was often punished. Once he was flogged for saving another convict from drowning. Five blows of the knout are supposed to kill a man, and Dostoyevsky was taken to the Prison for dead. His wonderful spirit saved him and afterwards he was known always as Pokoinik (the dead). The officials had concluded that he must not live; so, like many others, his name died.

Omsk is the center of the great butter trade of Siberia. The grazing land throughout this region is very good. A butter merchant boarded the train here, and he told us that one half of the butter consumed in London last year was produced in Siberia. I waved my hand to the town in the distance.

"Another time! There are letters in Moscow."

Petropavlovsk is a large town — an important cattle market. The caravans from the south pass through Petropavlovsk and one sees an occasional camel.

The engines — there were two now — climbed bravely up. We had left winter way behind. The long slopes were full of yellow and brown,

with here and there a patch of green grass. On the mountain tops, in the distance, there was snow. It made the green all the more precious. Just as one is about to lose a thing, it becomes doubly dear.

Such glory! Sweeping country, carpeted with the rarest of colors! The tops of the larger birches were green and the smaller ones shining yellow. It was an afternoon of surprises, first shadow, then sunshine. There was a mist in the distance; the hills were dim and blue, or, as the sun struck them, gleaming white. It was so warm, so blessed,— like coming back to life, after death.

Flocks of birds hovered over the trees. The cattle stood out separately in the fields, not huddled together. The children smiled. Piles of birch wood, near the villages, caught the flickering rays of the sun. Everything glistened and gleamed.

At Kourgan, a child laughed as she tried to tie a bright shawl about another child's head. The fringe bothered her. I tried to do it. I don't think it was very successful, but we all laughed together. The autumn haze softened

and blended the whole landscape. It was God's earth, and it was good to see.

We passed through miles and miles of white birches. Madame told me that in eastern Siberia, where the birch was crowding out the native trees, Russians thought it the sign of the constantly extending dominion of the Tsar. The inhabitants treat this beautiful wood carelessly, in spite of their constant use of it. With its bark, Russian leather is tanned; the oil is used for perfume; the wood is used for kitchen utensils and for firewood; while the sap is prized as medicine.

I was working hard, writing, and studying Russian. There were all nationalities on the train, except American. The Person never ceased to be uncomfortable, but I had the little Russian madame to speak to occasionally.

We passed the iron-works of Mr. Chapelraloff. The foundry is surrounded by a multitude of log houses, some of one, some of two stories. Labor is very cheap and very poor. The peasants work in factories or mills, in any great numbers, only during the winter, and even then they do not work regularly. The Chef-de-train told me

that this was a fine town to live in. It looked very dreary.

Days differ on the Trans-Siberian. On some days there are many stops and on others there are few. The train passes every station with respect, so one can not say whether it is going to stop or not. Soldiers throughout the country cease their work or play, and stand at attention while the train passes, because it represents the Tsar's government.

We had crawled along for a day and a half, before we reached Chelyabinsk, where the St. Petersburg line branches off. It is here that the exiles were divided, after their march over the Urals. Families were separated — friends bade each other goodbye forever — some went north and some went east. We were headed west, thank heaven!

At many of the stations there are booths, where the women of the countryside come to sell bread, boiled milk, butter, cooked game, etc. Through the Urals, the stations have booths selling cheap jewelry and wrought iron. The best Ural stones — amethyst, aquamarine, emerald, garnet, sapphire and tourmaline — are found at Chelya-

binsk. There were many exposed for sale, mostly glass, no doubt.

I looked longingly at the aquamarines. There was a large one for 25 rubles. I had concluded not to buy it, even before a voice at my elbow said — in American! —

"I bought some stones at the mines here two years ago, and carried them to Chicago. The jeweler there told me they were worth ten per cent. less than I paid."

What a thing convention is! To be sneered at, if you like; but yet it is the brake of the ages, keeping many of us from untoward gulches. Just now it prevented me from throwing my arms around this man's neck and proclaiming him my dear friend. It helped me not to smile too much, and to thank him in an even voice.

He had been walking on the platform at the stations, yet I had not recognized him as a fellow-countryman. I had noticed that he was in a first class compartment, and that he never spoke to anyone but a Japanese, who — the Person said, was coming to Europe on some financial embassy. I had never heard him speak a word of English.

We walked up and down. There was a keen

mountain breeze, but more refreshing than that was the characteristic American turn to this man's wit and his American point of view. I hadn't realized until that moment how different it was. He even said slang — and I listened for every syllable.

The stations were no longer to be dreaded. As soon as the Person discovered that there was another English-speaking man on the train, he faded away into the distance and never bothered me again.

The desolateness had gone out of the landscape. At times there were forests of tall pine trees, with short birches pushing their yellow heads between. The mountains that can be seen from the train are not as impressive as those of Switzerland; but the effect of the radiant color can hardly be told. The yellow grass melted into the warmer, lighter yellow of the leaves, and echoed in the yellow brown of the upper trunks of the pine trees.

Color in the forest, a tingle in the air, and a song in my heart. It sings of Home.

CHAPTER XVII

EMIGRANTS

EMIGRANTS, in a seething mass, were headed in all directions. The government has done its best to encourage the people to settle in Siberia,— Russians, that is. The peasants are no longer serfs in Russia. They are emancipated, yet, like some of our negroes, they find it hard to gain a living. How dull, stupid and bestial a human face can look, no one knows until he has seen a Russian peasant of the lower type.

They live in communes. If a member of the commune is hired, the money is paid to the commune; and no peasant can leave his village without the permission of the commune. Neither the peasant nor the commune owns the land; they have only an inheritable usufruct, which means the right to cultivate it. Neither the peasant nor the commune can sell this right, nor can they even give it away; but the individ-

ual peasant can be held responsible for the payment of his land tax, if the commune is too poor to pay it.

The punishments meted out by communes are picturesque, as well as practical. A commune near Krasnoyarsk, which is very poor, decided last year to remit the fines of money. The offender was ordered to give a bottle of vodka to each member of the commune. All minor offenses are judged locally. It is only for great offenses that the culprit is sent to the Mironby Sud. I hope that some day America, in dealing with Russian immigrants, will make use of their communal training.

In the communes, the peasants are often born to a heritage of debt; and the government has been trying to make their lot more endurable by assisting them to emigrate. In 1906, the government decided to aid 1,000,000 people to go to western Siberia every year. On trial, this number was found to be impracticable and, according to the published account, 250,000 are now assisted annually. Every family is allowed the equivalent of $100 in cash. Forty acres of land is given to each male member of the household.

Supplies and agricultural implements are bought on long credit.

The immigrants are further helped by free medicines at the stations and free bread for the children and the sick. At every station there is a huge cauldron of boiling water, "Keep-a-tok," on the platform. Half the train rushes out with tea-kettles. This is not merely hot water — it is actively boiling.

Few Russians are so poor that they do not own something that looks like a horse. One of the people on the train, speaking of a peasant who was very poor, said, "He hasn't anything — he hasn't even a horse."

The travellers are mostly muzhiks, done up in sheepskin coats, the wool on the inside. In Moscow they told us that only shaggy, long-haired furs are worth the wearing,— furs like seal didn't keep one warm. These men often had their feet swathed in sacking, and sometimes straw wrapped over that.

There were occasional Cossacks, "very bad," as I was assured by everybody. They are intensely interesting, anyhow, and some day I am going to the Cossack country. The Cossacks

whom we saw were not as tall as the Russians, but well set up, their white sheepskin hats on the sides of their heads, and many silver cartridge-cases in their belts. They wore high riding-shoes of red leather. What is there about red leather shoes that stays the eye of a babe or a grandmother? Their coats were long and belted and they walked as if there were springs in their heels.

Hunters were on the trains in October. There are tigers about Lake Balkash, lynxes in the Altai, bears everywhere, and many two-humped camels, deer, roebucks, gazelles, antelope, wolves, foxes, badger and ermine. I want you to see this picture of a bear and its cub that were captured by one of my Irkutsk acquaintances. (The next illustration.)

We passed through the Kinghiz steppe. The Kinghiz are a strange people, whose national proverb is, "Better fast for a week than change any custom of our grandfathers." They correspond, in a way, to our Indians. They live with their flocks, and their commerce is in sheep. A wife is worth four good sheep. A horse brings the same price, but a cow is worth eight sheep.

On the train there was a young Russian woman, who was a medical student. Like so many women in Siberia, she was not content with an idle life.

"Why should I stay at home and do nothing? I am engaged, but my fiancé is in college, just as I am. I would have studied medicine at Tomsk University, but women are no longer received there. They hope to be admitted again. There is such need of physicians in Siberia."

She had been camping with her father all summer. She told me of the immense number of different peoples that go to make up Siberia. Her father was a government official, and in one trip of two months they had spoken fifteen languages and dialects. The list which goes to make up Russia is long. Poles, Tartars, Finns, Persians, Circassians, Mongolians, Mingrelians, Great Russians, Little Russians, Cossacks, Germans, Jews and Greeks,—all governed from the city of Petersburg. Where in the world is there such centralization?

The Orthodox Russian Church requires all inhabitants to be conformists, but only negative conformists. Outward observance of the Ortho-

Tame bears at Irkutsk

dox rites is demanded, together with the keeping of the two hundred fête-days of the Church. I was told that there was every variety of nature worship in Siberia.

One of the many interesting sects is the Old Believers, who date from the time in the reign of the Emperor Alexis, when the Patriarch Nilson had the rites of the Church revised. Errors had constantly crept into the holy books, because they were copied in the monasteries by copyists who were peasants. It was ordered that the erroneous books be destroyed, together with the old icons. This the Old Believers refused to do. They were consequently forced to live in secret places. The crucial point in the creed of the Old Believers is the spelling of the name of Jesus,— whether there shall be a J or not.

The great plain of western Siberia covers 2,000,000 square versts. It is divided into the governments of Tobolsk and Tomsk. In this part of the province there is fine grazing land. There were cattle everywhere. The cows were small and lean, but they give milk having a large percentage of cream. The black soil reminds one of Illinois.

Two Germans on the train had come from China to buy horses and cows.

"You have to hold a writing for every transaction. I take a receipt when I buy a cigar," said one.

That is a national characteristic. From Moscow to Warsaw, when I did not have the porter write out a receipt, as I paid him for the sheets, one of the women in the compartment spoke to me:

"You must have a receipt for everything in Russia. Nothing is too small. The people have no regard for any spoken promise."

Nechivo!

After descending the Urals, we passed Ufa, that old Tartar town, which still shelters queer customs, but prospers in spite of all. At Kinel, a branch line goes south-east to central Asia, and there is a Wagon-lit train from Moscow to Andijan. Down across the open steppe lay the unending deserts of Asia.

In this region there is a nomad population of Bashkirs, who come into a town of huts for the winter, but in summer roam through the flat country with their herds.

The pious stood up and crossed themselves, as we reached the iron bridge over the Volga.

Through the Pilgrim, as interpreter, a student was persuaded to sing "A-down the Mother Volga." He began shyly and low. One by one, the passengers joined in, and it stirred one's blood to hear these men's voices saluting the river. The bridge itself is worthy of a nod. Seven thousand tons of ore were used in its construction, all taken from the Ural mines.

Samara was at the other — the western — end of the bridge. There are koumiss sanitariums here. A Tartar woman, who had been at a sanitarium, came into the next compartment. She was tall and slender. Her colorless, olive skin was like rich cream. Her lips were thin and very red. Her straight hair was parted in the middle and puffed. Her hands were whiter than her face and useless. She had taken the koumiss cure for her complexion. Samara is not starred in Baedeker, but it should be in the book of beauty.

We thought the waters of the Volga should have stopped at Samara long enough to test the koumiss. The river is yellow and turbid.

From Samara to Astrakhan it has low banks, and the steamer trip, which is comfortable, is not picturesque. Farther north, however, towards Nizhni-Novgorod, it is delightful, and the accommodations on the steamer are said to be livable.

As we came nearer Moscow, the country grew more monotonous — if that were possible. It was the monotony of a flat country with occasional towns; and now the railroad condescended to pass through the villages.

In one gray settlement of log houses, a group of children came running through the one street towards the train. A line of stately geese waddled beside the fence. A mother held her baby flat against the window to see us pass. In the field outside the town, a man and a girl stood facing the sun, hand in hand. Along the footpath, a white-haired man walked his horse towards home.

There had been many stops all day. Consequently, the American and I were better acquainted. I had fallen into the pleasant habit of dining with the Russian officer and his wife. Madame and I talked, and Madame translated

for the officer. I could understand his questions about America, so long as he didn't change the subject. That is the thing to be dreaded in a new language.

At St. Moritz — St. Malo — in Paris — everyone had said it was mostly Russian women whom one saw smoking so conspicuously in the corridors — that all Russian women smoke. I met only three women in Siberia or Russia who smoked. I have met many in England and China and some in America. When I asked women about it, they said:

"It used to be. My grandmother smoked. Everybody used to,— and they say it's coming in at Petersburg."

Russian men make up for any lack of smoking among women. They smoke while they're waiting for breakfast. They smoke straight through breakfast — between mouthfuls. It's a very funny sight. The cigarets get mixed up with the tea and have to be thrown away. Matches mix with the butter, and altogether such close companionship of smoking and eating doesn't make for tidiness.

The groups at the stations showed the effect

of the oncoming city. There was less color.

Occasionally one saw it in the country still. We passed a red gravel bank at the side of the track. Men were perched upon it at various levels. The blue and orange blouses stood out against the red earth.

Women often work on the railroad. In short skirts and men's heavy shoes, it is difficult to tell that they are women, until you see the shawls over their heads.

The Siberian woman is not very attractive, but she is blest with brains in every class above the peasant.

On the platform at Penza, a large town, in the crisp air, a woman was spread out over her bundles, fast asleep. She held her precious tin tea-kettle in her hand. One large leg, in a red woolen stocking, went off at a right angle from the rest of her. She wore men's high boots and a man's fur coat.

In Moscow the peasant women wear long skirts, which cover up their ungainly boots. The skirts become covered with mud and slush for eight or ten inches and go swish-swash about the leather boots. In the country the women

wear the same boots but they are sensible enough to wear short skirts.

The distinguishing between men and women is much harder, because the coats of the men have a full skirt, which comes to about the same length as the women's. Both sexes wear bright belts over their coats, in order to keep out the cold.

Through the daytime, there were often beggars at the stations,— miserable, half-clothed creatures, who turned away at a cross look. Through the region about Petropavlovsk, where the crops had been poor and the cattle and people were on the verge of starvation, the Russian passengers gave liberally.

The days were so happy. My writing prospered. At the Pilgrim's suggestion, I re-read "Marie Claire," and found its simplicity as tonic as a mountain stream. The Russian officer was greatly interested in the rumor of war, and hopped out to buy papers at every stop. He asked the station-master if any soldiers were passing. They suggested that I should come to their hotel in Moscow, but I had written to the National. I hoped for letters there. Not wild

horses could have turned me from the door. It was agreed that if they could not find rooms at their hotel they were to come to the National.

On Sunday there were larger crowds at the stations. World customs are inclusive. Peasants and officers alike had come to the "vahgzahl" to see the train. There were too many young girls in groups, who ranged up and down, laughing softly and smoothing down their hair, which was puffed and marcelled.

One lassie had a daring way of tossing a wool scarf over her shoulder. It was no sooner in place than she began to pull it gently down, to give it a flirty toss backward. I thought of what a Russian had said. I asked him whether what the Irkutsk countess had related about the few marriages was true. He nodded his head.

"Yes. It's true. Men don't dare to marry a Russian girl. You can't be sure whether she is good or not, now-days."

Young men wearing the blue caps of the University students were in groups. Evidently they had come to the country for the week end. Here and there a young girl, whose eyes were lowered, wore a colored apron, embroidered in cross-

stitch. A Russian crowd is never without color, and with the background of the yellow leaves and the brown grass every turn of the head brought a new picture.

CHAPTER XVIII

PUTIEM DOROJSKI (MOVING ALONG) — A SALUTATION OF THE ROAD

SO we came towards Moscow. It was curious to see a large factory marked Singer Sewing Machines. There are American agricultural implements sold here too, but it is not easy for a foreigner to acquire a large fortune either in Russia or Siberia. The government is not cordial. Yet the country has such unexampled richness. Fortunes are lying about, to be taken by anyone having the courage and patience and lack of conscience necessary. The amount of red tape that is required even to sell a fur skin is unbelievable.

If the opportunities for Americans to gain wealth in Siberia appear scant, there are many positions open to those who wish to teach English, or to occupy the place of English clerk. Such persons should always keep in communication with their home consul.

I was seeking no position, however, and I retired as usual on Sunday night. The conductor was to knock on my door at six, for we were scheduled to reach the Koursk station at five minutes of seven.

I dreamed of Home. I thought my best beloved was knocking on the door; he had come to find me. I was so glad! I awoke standing in the aisle. There was an awful pounding on the door.

"Da — da — da."

It must be plain that I was awake. How they pounded! I opened the door a little, and a woman, bonneted and furred, walked in, as if by prior right. I felt rather angry, that a companion should have been given me in the middle of the night, and so near the journey's end as Toula. I had been alone across Asia and Europe and here I hadn't charity enough to share my compartment for half a night.

The lady was fat and her clothes were tight. I aided her as I could, and we retired to rest, her bed having been made; a performance which was preceded by moving every one of my possessions. Most of the small things lost themselves,

and the conductor and I had a still hunt for them in the morning. The hunt was a silent one on my side. He talked all the time and it gradually dawned upon me that if I had feed him the night before, instead of waiting until morning, the lady would have been placed in another compartment.

According to agreement, the Pilgrim came for me. We stalked over the wet pavement after the porters. The Pilgrim and the porter interviewed some cabmen. As the clerk of the National put it, they were "buying a carriage." There is no regular tariff in Moscow; you bargain for your drive. It turned out that we each paid a ruble.

The procession started. I shall never forget that impression of Moscow. It was too early for anyone except the cleaners to be about. A stray boy opened a shop door, or a man leaned across a window to gather up the papers that had covered the display. The streets were wet. A cold mist rose from the horses' backs. The air was very chilly.

Through the grayness burst the gold spires of the city. Around a corner was the gay, frescoed

wall of a church. The streets wound in and out in an aimless way, but every turn showed some unexpected beauty. Now it was an odd door and then a balcony.

The morning could not make Moscow cold. She was welcoming us with all her Byzantine warmth.

At the hotel, the sole occupant of the office spoke Russian. Thanks to the Pilgrim, I claimed a room; but alas! alas! there were no letters.

Looking out of my window, Moscow was still beautiful, but not so gay. There was a church, side on. A fresco of bright saints decorated the wall. A little hood at the top did its best to keep the weather off the holy company. The gilded turrets drew down the sun's rays — after much effort.

Breakfast over, I could hardly wait for the banks to open. It's a long time from seven to ten. The tired-eyed porter undertook my case. A boy was despatched to buy a cab and we were off.

A man opens the door at the bank — another directs you upstairs. Human beings are such a

cheap commodity in Russia! An armed soldier walked up and down in the hall. It gives one a feeling of security.

Were there any letters? There were. There were stacks of them. I stood there and read them through and laughed aloud for very joy. The soldier turned up my aisle and walked past twice. Poor man! What a shame to disturb him! I looked up and smiled. Then he knew that I was not a nihilist,—only a happy traveller,—and he went back to walk up and down the corridor. I felt like blessing everyone. I gave the opening man and the pointing man a pourboire. They understood. Letters had been received before by Germans,—all foreigners are now called Germans in Russia, as they used to be called Chinese.

A permit is necessary for the Kremlin, the famous palace, and it takes a few days to obtain it. I went to the Consul's office. The President at Tomsk had telegraphed to the Consul. I was ushered into the inner office. Two men were giving the windows a final wash, before they were nailed up for the winter.

Thanks to that telegram, everything was

arranged. What have I ever done, that people should be so considerate?

The Consul gave me his card, with a message written on it, and I drove to the Kremlin. It was a radiant winter day now, cold and clear. The streets were still wet, and the roofs, in places, guarded the rain. The sun slanted across the newly gilded turrets of the churches. In front of the Iversky Virgin, the most sacred of the minor chapels, peasants were kneeling in the mud. They surely couldn't have been praying to the God of cleanliness. The steps of this chapel are made of iron, because that is the only material that will stand the wear of the worshipping feet.

The jagged wall of the Kremlin rose in brightening colors. There! Yes, it is the holy Spassky gate. Off came the izvostchik's hat. I bowed by soul, since my hat was pinned on. At the side, almost in the path of the droshkies, stood a man praying. Above the arch, the holy image shone in the light of the silver lantern, which burns night and day.

For once I found a Russian izvostchik driving faster than I cared to go. I wouldn't have

gotten out of that droshky for anything. The cabbie and I didn't understand each other. There was an officer stationed outside the entrance of the first building. He took the card, read it, took off his cap, and conversed with the driver.

Bows — deep bows. An officer was summoned, who directed the coachman where to go.

We went there. A guard stood at the gate. He took the card, read it, took off his cap, and conversed with the driver.

After that, we had a delightfully long drive past many churches, along a white wall, and into what seemed like a quiet street. At the earnest invitation of the izvostchik, I got out of the droshky and went into the office. A porter, with stolid face and anxious eyes, sat in the hall. He gave me a comprehensive look, which implied that "foreigners were no treat to him." He didn't even open his mouth, which was a saving of force. He simply waved his hand. Another man appeared, took the card, and returned with the permit.

Then we rattled through the streets again to the main entrance.

I try to form in my mind a plan of procedure, before reaching a place the language of which is new. This time I couldn't do it. I could only say to myself, over and over,

"How beautiful! How entrancing!"

I said it to the izvostchik. He smiled and whipped up his horse.

How can I make you see it?

You know the pictures — but the living Kremlin is so much more beautiful — more engulfing. It stands on the top of a hill, which its rosy, notched walls surround. The green-roofed watch towers peep up at intervals, and everywhere there are towers and turrets, gold and red and blue and white.

CHAPTER XIX

HOLY MOTHER MOSCOW

I WAS dazed by this flood of beauty. So it happened that the doorman had taken my permit and I was standing near the cloak-racks, rather helplessly. A party was just forming. I supposed I was to join it. I trailed after.

No. Something was the matter. They were speaking to me. I was to wait. A guide brought a chair and said that the head guide had been sent for. Everybody in sight was Russian, for the tourist season was past. Several uniformed men glanced carelessly at me — in passing. They were paying too much attention to me. I began to wish that my passport was in my pocket. The hotel management was having it stamped, so that I could leave town without inconvenience.

A round, smiling man came down the staircase. He bowed and said that he was the head guide; and he spoke German.

"Don't you speak French?" I asked.

"I can't speak French. I wish I could. But I speak so slowly that my German is almost French. Anybody can understand it."

He was right. His German was very easy. Who am I, to say that it was bad?

We started. The long, regal staircase brought us to the newer portion of the Kremlin, which is big and sumptuous, and not very different from other great palaces. Perhaps there is rather more gold than usual. In the hall of St. George, for example, the whole ceiling is of gold. The halls of various other saints were big and grand and chilly. Why did they waste this huge mass of marble, porphyry and all the rest, on a foreign style, which is approximated in many other large cities, when at their very finger-tips lay a monument of national architecture to be copied?

We paused at the throne of the Tsar. The canopy, encrusted with gems, is surmounted by a golden crown. The red covering was drawn up from the corner of the steps. A party passed. It was composed of humble people. Many of them knelt on the steps of the throne. Some

raised the cover and kissed the red carpet. If knees begin to kneel, they quickly form the habit. Many times in Russia I asked myself whether it was better to kneel so often, or not to kneel at all.

This new part of the Kremlin has one advantage over the other palaces that I have seen: it is more personal — more near. I'm not sure but that this effect is due to the fact that the rooms are not separated by long corridors, as is usual. They often open into small, irregular halls.

The doors are solid gold and solid silver and solid bronze. The guide made such unlimited use of "ganz," that I must have looked incredulous, for he insisted on my shutting one of the doors. There is no doubt that it was solid something. The arms of the various sovereigns are wrought into the doors, and often into the wall-covering.

There was a bed-room, which is used by the Tsarina, on the infrequent occasions when she visits Moscow. This room has beautiful jade columns, and solid pieces of jade for the tops of the tables. An ornate gilt dressing-table in the

queen-mother's room had a mirror for its huge top. Think of seeing the under side of your chin every time you powdered your nose. If you laughed, you'd see the roof of your mouth. Being a queen has its drawbacks, after all.

At every turn in the 700 chambers of the Kremlin there is a chapel. Whenever an addition was built, a chapel or two was included. Some of these chapels, seen through glass doors, are like glistening diamonds.

Party after party dragged past us. We sat in chairs — on chests — even on forbidden brocade. If there was a beautiful chair, the guide uncovered it for me to sit upon. He loved the objects he was showing He fingered the old brocade tenderly. No slightest turn of a post or interesting lock escaped him. We lingered in the room where Napoleon had slept. The bedspread was made by a dead queen, and it is beginning to fall apart in places. He patted the threads into place.

The Old Kremlin, or Terem, is a labyrinth of crooked passages and low doors. We were in the Tsarika's Room, most brilliantly barbaric in its riotous gold walls, on which are bright feudal

frescoes. This room was restored during the time of Nicholas I., and they put in a highly polished French floor in place of the interesting chiselled stone, which is in some of the rooms and passages. It is not comfortable to walk on — Nechivo — it is most beautiful.

At the entrance of the Gold Dining Hall I stood transfixed. It was a symphony in ebony and low tones. Here, after his coronation, the Tsar comes, in all his royal trappings, to dine with his nobles. An ornate pillar in the middle of the room is surrounded by two shelves, upon which the royal plate is displayed during the Tsar's visits. On state occasions, the guests are served from gold plate, by lackeys in gilded livery. In the Treasury we saw the 1600 artistically chased silver and gold vessels. There is a gallery, where the ladies may look down and see their lords eat — if they have good luck. The opening is small, and only a limited number of ladies could profit by it. A kind hand has placed it opposite the sovereign's throne. If he dines alone, he can, at least, regard the ladies of his entourage.

It is said that civilization tends to diminish a nation's architectural ability. As the human

mind becomes more complex, its expression is not so straightforward. Instead of trusting itself to build its dreams, it looks about to see how others have expressed themselves, and in the looking the inspiration is lost. The older Kremlin was an inspiration. They used the natural materials of the country,— wood and concrete, masonry covered with plaster, which is whitewashed.

We were in that Golden Dining Room. The kind guide allowed me to sit at the little opening and pretend that I was a lady of the Russian Court. It was only pretense — and still, if one were born in Russia —? How pretty Caroline would have looked with her gold hair against the dark background.

These rooms hold every charm of perfect proportion and harmonizing color, allied with regal splendor; but one could have lived contentedly in any of them. The ceilings are low and the arches bring them still nearer. The guide was explaining about the reception, throne, dining, council and sleeping rooms, sometimes making me say over again what he had said, that he might be sure I understood.

"You speak German," he said encouragingly, "sehr gut."

When we had finished the tour of the rooms, we went through the Old Kremlin again. I didn't ask him. He knew that I couldn't bear to leave the beautiful place.

The end had to come at last. I would gladly have emptied my purse into his hands. He deserved it. As it was, I gave him three rubles. He had allowed me to stay in that enchanted palace over three hours.

"When you are in the hotel, and think of something that you'd like to see, come back tomorrow. You don't need to give me any more money. I'll be here all the morning. You have only to ask for me."

A Russian to whom I was praising the guide said he didn't dare to risk receiving another fee as large as that, for it meant too much vodka. He was entrenching himself against possible temptation.

I walked past the belfry of Ivan the Great, which is really the campanile of the Kremlin. Beneath the cupola is the inscription, "Under the protection of the Holy Trinity, by order of

Cathedral of the Assumption

the Tsar and Grand Duke Boris Feodorovitch, autocrat of all the Russias," etc.

Near by is the largest bell in the world, "Tsar Kolokol." It fell during one of the many fires in Moscow, and lay buried for a hundred years. Now it stands on a pedestal. At the side of this bell, which was never rung, is a huge cannon, which was never fired.

The Cathedral of the Assumption was immediately in front. It is here that the Tsar crowns himself. There is no one holy enough to perform the office for him. The interior is hung with banners and portraits; all other exposed spaces are of gold. There were a few beggars and two old women in the church. The custodian insisted on my following him into a sort of sacristy, to view some sepulchres. With his coat sleeve, he wiped a place for me to kiss. Seeing that I was not to profit by the privilege, one of the old women, who had followed us, placed a kiss there.

I did wish I could have bartered for one of the icons. They were particularly appealing and very old. They were completely encrusted with precious stones.

The beggars walked through the church for a distance after me. There was no cab in sight. When one appeared, I hailed the driver and gave him the order.

"Hotel National."

He sat stolidly and shook his head. "Ne pah-neemah'yoo. Ne pahneemah'yoo."

There was no other cab in sight. Who would make this man understand?

The guide.

It was something of a hunt to find the guide. He really found me. He saw me floating about and inferred that I must be in difficulty. He came to see. The driver grunted, turned his horse, and we scampered off. It was snowing. The little horse and the big izvostchik and the medium fare all liked it.

That afternoon I tramped the streets, visiting every church that came. There are said to be sixteen hundred churches in Moscow. I asked several of the inhabitants, but they differed in their estimates.

One woman said, "How can I tell? A forty of forty,"— which means an uncountable number.

The names of these churches are amazing.

The Vassili Blagennoi Cathedral, Moscow

"St. Nicholas on Chicken's Legs" belonged to poultry dealers. "Life-giving Trinity in the Mud" might have been the name of any of them, but it is applied to only one. "The Nine Holy Martyrs on Cabbage-stalks" is on the site of a market garden. These churches are often pink or green or white, with green roofs and many gilded domes.

After your eyes have drunk their fill of the Kremlin, you begin to notice the amazing Church of Vasili Blagennoi. It is like a bouquet of flowers, rather than a cathedral. There is a spire, and on each of the nine chapels is a dome, all different in color and shape. The façades also are individual. One can only compare it to flowers, because of the superabundance of color, — red and green and white and pink and blue and gold and silver. It is like nothing else. Something of its history stays in its twisted spires, which are Byzantine and Hindoo at the same time.

The province of Kazan was conquered by Ivan the Terrible and the inhabitants were ordered to bear the expense of building this cathedral. The architect was an Italian, and the story is that as

soon as the church was finished, his eyes were burnt out by order of the Tsar, who wished no replica of his wonderful church.

Inside there were women praying and lighting tapers. The floors were covered with square jute rugs, which had become wet from passing feet. Kneeling on the wet rug before the altar of the Virgin was a young mother, her baby's head on her shoulder. The baby slept. I walked forward to see the mother's face. She was a Tartar. The clear white of her skin was pressed against the red shawl that covered her baby's head. A pink shadow colored her cheek. Her eyes were raised in mute supplication, and the tears ran softly down her face. There was no one near. As I passed, I patted her arm She turned and smiled. There seems to be a fairly well authenticated belief that Russian husbands sometimes whip their wives. Perhaps she had been whipped, perhaps she hadn't. At any rate, she wept.

Outside, twilight was falling over the white city. I hailed a cab; by a concession of fate, the izvostchik spoke German. We drove for an hour.

Moscow is a fairy city when her streets are car-

peted with snow. The green river ran between white banks. The Quai of the Kremlin was a mass of white and pink and gold. The shadow of the wall lay heavily on the snow. Above the wall, at short intervals, the turrets lifted their red heads.

Just then, a bewildering yellow light flooded the river, the Kremlin, the whole panorama. It was the tardy sun, come out only to set; with it came the end of the hour. As if it mattered! I had bargained only for an hour. Did that change the sunset?

We went straight on, flush into the golden west. The river changed from green to gold — the buildings were radiant pink. The street over which we splashed was red and white by turns. We flew over the tinted ground. The buildings were great lumps of white or crimson or pink. Darkness stalked upon us from the side streets. He waited now at every corner. He pointed the way home.

In my room, with warmth and light, I read through the Kremlin guide-book, and saw it all over again.

CHAPTER XX

FAREWELLS

THE Pilgrim had said he would be back for dinner. It was already after eight and I inferred that his friends were fêting him. Thanks to the kind Russian custom, I could dine in my room.

The dinner was no sooner over than a knock came at the door. It was the Pilgrim, quite out of breath from hurrying. He had only then finished the day's business. Some friends were dining with him. Would I come?

I sat with them and heard an entertaining discussion concerning life in Russia; heard, too, about the apartment into which one of the friends and his wife were to move the next day. The rent was 1800 rubles — $900 — a year, for an apartment of seven rooms, not too far from the center of the town.

One of the wives asked me to go the next day to look over the work at the Handicraft Rooms.

This Society is composed of Russian women who teach peasants to do various sorts of hand work. The government supplies the material, often below cost price, and sometimes gives it. The first floor was taken up with an exhibition of furniture, many of the pieces being replicas of old designs. Upstairs were odd bits of jewelry, laces, embroideries and wonderful toys. The limit of my trunks was reached so quickly.

That afternoon I spent with the Verestchagin pictures. You know how there are days when your guardian angel flies ahead and paints the world in gay colors for your eyes? He had painted all Moscow, but most of all this gallery. The visit was enchanting from the first.

The low white building of the Trétyakov Gallery is set back from the street. The doors, which open hard, are of beautiful design. I stayed to trace the outline with my eye.

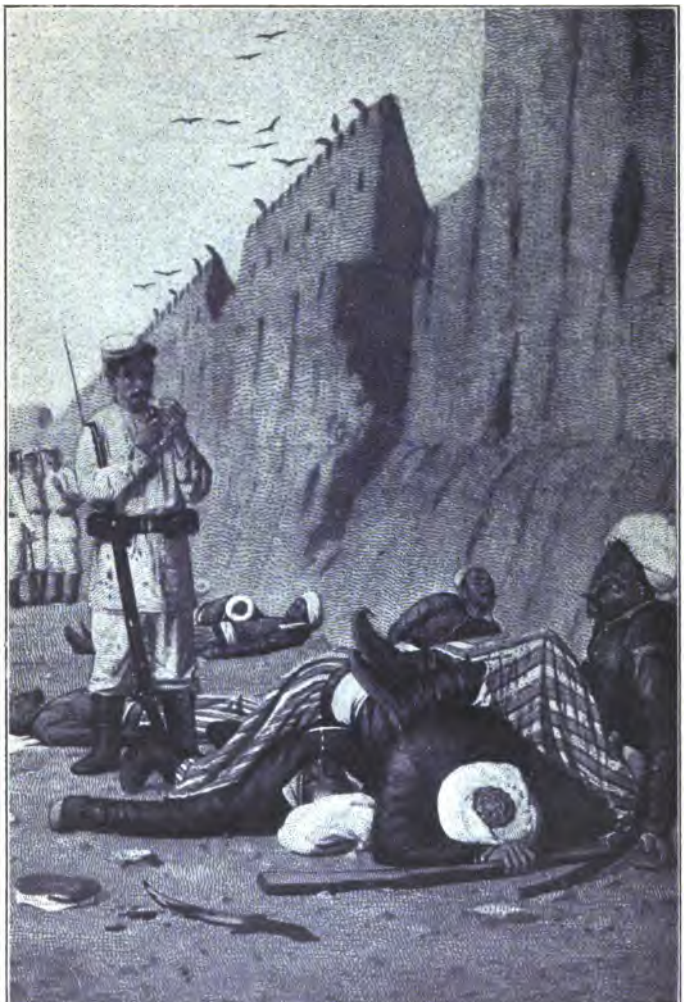
There is a usual procedure in all such matters. The attendant on the other side of the door awaited me, for I had given signs of my presence. When I did not appear, he opened the door and came to see what kept this next visitor from entering.

One passed to the lines of hooks, where the wraps are left. There was a row of huge sacking bags on the floor. Startled for a minute, I wondered what was put into them. I felt of one. Rubbers were inside — Russian goloshes, which take up a considerable amount of space and look not unlike the figure of a child.

One goes through several rooms of well painted but badly hung pictures, in order to make the acquaintance of Verestchagin. I have seldom been more deeply impressed than I was by this man's work. He set himself the task of showing humanity the curse of war; and at the last, still striving for a final picture, he went down on the Russian flagship *Petropavlovsky,* at Port Arthur. I stayed until the uttermost limit of the gallery time, and held a fairly long conversation in Russian with one of the custodians. It was somewhat mixed, but we each cherished a deep admiration for Verestchagin.

Another jolly dinner with the Pilgrim, followed by a long talk and many stories of Siberia, closed the day.

There was only one forenoon left. Should I go to the Kremlin, or to the pictures? It was a



"The Conquered" by Verestchagine

compromise. I drove past the Kremlin, photographing its Babel towers in my mind as best I could; and saying pretty things to the Spassky gate.

Then I went to the gallery. I bade "Good-by" to the pictures I liked best; to the yellow soldier against the yellow wall, guarding the "Conquered" Arabs, who slept in brilliant clothes, limp against the wall, but alive and warm if you touched them; to the "Bride," who stood before the bright-hued company, half overcome with fright and wine and unknown dreams; to the rows of Mussulmans in the sun-steeped corridor, who inspected the "Trophies"; to the lurid mass of human flesh and gaudy cloak, and the one brown fist pounding the bare, white back of the roaring "Cossack writing to the Sultan"; to the clear air, outlining the dead face, which a Turk held up for view; to the snow-filled picture of "Napoleon's Retreat," the trees drooping with their white burden and the men stricken with their weight of sorrow.

So the way lies out past the "Tamerlan Door."

What a masterly mind — what a painstaking hand — which caressed the light, and catching it, held it! Moscow lost in color, when the gallery door shut in Verestchagin's pictures.

At the hotel, the doorman with peacock feathers encircling his cap gave me a note. It marked the end of the forenoon's farewells.

"I have to see about that investigation, and must leave town at 12.25. I am inconsolable, but I cannot keep good my word to see you off. I suggest that you ask the hotel management to send someone to the station with you.

"Hoping that you will depart from Russia without mishap, I take leave of you. The pleasant recollection of our happy talks together will stay with me while I live.

THE PILGRIM."

THE END