

the proprietors themselves, who were resident on their properties at the time.

There was one who, I remember, told me that he was obliged to leave his village, which was a small one, as all his peasants were dead, and he only made his escape with one man, who was his servant—that all the others were lying dead in their huts, without anybody to bury them.

Scurvy in its most malignant form was the disease that carried them off, which was no doubt produced by improper food, for in many instances straw was chopped up and mixed with flour to make bread, which, at the best of times, is not very good, being quite black, and very coarse in appearance.

Of this the quantity was so small that it was insufficient to keep the body and soul together.

The serfs, in general, have very limited ideas on the subject of religion, as they, for the greater part, can neither read nor write; they go to church, where they repeat, with great devotion, a certain number of Aves and Paternosters in their own language, or rather Slavonic, and cross themselves while the priest is celebrating mass, which is done with more or less pomp according to the occasion, or the riches of the church. If you ask a peasant, where is God? he will generally point to the corner of the room, where there are hanging one or more coarse, badly-executed paintings, representing some of their saints, and which he is firmly persuaded are so many gods.

This will, perhaps, create a smile of pity in England, but it is the natural result of their uneducated state, which precludes them from understanding all abstract ideas. They must have something corporeal, something they can see and feel; consequently, to abolish these would be to do away with all religion in their eyes.

In their way they are very religious: I have even known some of them who, when they are about to commit a sin, will cover carefully their images, that God may not see what they are about. They are very strict in their fasts, which are very severe, as neither milk, butter, eggs, or anything that is produced by animals, is permitted; and of course animal food is forbidden.

The principal and longest fast is, of course, Lent, when they do not even eat fish during the first and last weeks, nor on Wednesdays and Fridays; from Good Friday till after mass on Easter-day, many of them eat nothing, but spend their time in watching, fasting, and praying, being firmly persuaded that Christ dies and rises again every year at this time.

But when the mass is over on Easter-day (generally about four, a. m.) ample amends is made for the long fast, by stuffing to a degree that is really disgusting to look at and think of: nor is the brandy-cup forgotten; for, during the three days that Easter lasts, it is almost a sin not to be drunk; nor are the priests backward in setting the example in both eating and drinking.

There is another curious custom, which is universal throughout the empire—that of kissing; you frequently see two men, who can hardly keep their legs, stop and uncover in the streets, one say, 'Christos voskres,' the other answering, 'Vi-istino voskres,' they kiss each other three times on alternate cheeks, and then walk on to perform the same ceremony with the next acquaintance they may happen to meet.

They are blindly attached to their religion; and this has been the means employed to arouse their enthusiasm for the present war, which, I am told, has been very successful in Russia Proper; but in Southern Russia it has only met with partial success, for there the people are not strongly attached to the paternal government of the Czar, and still have many traditions of their former freedom, before the hated Mazeppa.

They think themselves the only orthodox nation in the world, and all others they call Bussermann, or infidel. They have very curious notions of the rest of the world, and regard all foreign countries as so many provinces belonging to the Czar.

I have frequently been told that the Turks, incited by the French and English, had revolted, and that the latter, finding that the Turks were not able to do anything against the White Czar alone, had revolted too, although they, the peasants, could not understand why the French and English should revolt, since, by all accounts, they were much better off than the Russian peasants, who were the Czar's own particular people.

That is the idea of the present war, and, of course, the rebels are to be utterly destroyed by the power of the Czar; for they reason, that, if they were to revolt, they, who are a great people, would soon be annihilated; what must it then be for those whom they esteem insignificant in proportion to their knowledge of them?

The priests are objects of great veneration, although many of them are not far removed, in point of education, from their flock. I have met with those who could scarcely read, except their church books, which they had learned by rote. There are, however, many who are well educated, and even learned, but these are chiefly in towns. These are the two extremes, whereas the great body of them can read and write, and understand enough of the dogmas of the Russo-Greek Church to keep the people in their present state.

The passage of troops in Russia presents many singular and striking features. Every Russian regiment is composed of four battalions, each a thousand strong. On the march, two of these battalions are sent on, followed by the other two, at the interval of a day or two. These battalions are broken up into companies of 200 men each, under a captain, and directed to hold a parallel course. These companies are again subdivided

into detachments of about 50, and take their way among the villages, only concentrating before entering a large town, so that they generally march over about double the actual distance by the road. It is a curious sight to meet one of these detachments on the march. In front of each party generally marches a man singing military snatches, with a tambourine, or some such instrument, to keep up the spirit of his comrades, while the others join him in the chorus.

The effect of this is very strange, surrounded as one is, by the dreary landscape of a Russian winter, without tree, house, or human being in sight—nothing but snow both above and below, for the atmosphere seems impregnated with it, as the air of London is with smoke—there, in the midst of such a wilderness, to meet a body of armed men, with one of them at their head, singing, and perhaps dancing some war dance.

Those poor convicts condemned to Siberia suffer a martyrdom before they reach their final place of punishment. There they are made to work in the mines, and only allowed to see daylight once a year; or some, for minor offences, are allowed to work on the surface; others, again, are sent to colonize the country, which is covered with snow 9 months in the year; while the nobles are merely sent to the towns, where they live under strict surveillance of the police.

I have been told by many persons who have inhabited Tobolsk and other towns, that the society to be met with there is most superior, being for the most part composed of political exiles, and consequently of men of good acquirements, chiefly Poles. The common people, before being sent away, are generally sentenced to receive a certain number of lashes with an instrument called a pleit, or knout, which is a thick leather plaited thong about a yard long, attached to a handle about the same length. The criminal is paraded through the town with the executioner and a priest, accompanied by a drum to call attention, and a guard of soldiers; he is then taken to the scaffold, which is generally erected in some conspicuous place in the town; here he is bound and stripped, and the executioner takes his place at a few yards distant.

Upon his crying "Beware!" he walks slowly up, and strikes the culprit across the back, from the shoulder to the hip; he then walks slowly back again to his place, where he remains a short time, crying again "Beware!" and striking across the back in an opposite direction. As every stroke generally draws blood, and as they are delivered at intervals of about two minutes, there are few who can support more than 15 blows at a time, some not more than five.

When the unfortunate wretch has received as many blows as the medical man present thinks he can support without endangering his life, he is taken to the hospital, where he is kept till he is in a fit state to receive the remainder, or a portion of his sentence, which is only the prelude of his long and painful journey to the dreary regions of northern Asia.

The class of merchants in Russia is perhaps the most truly national, the most independent, and certainly the most patriotic at the present moment. They are chiefly from Russia Proper, and are men who by their own exertions have raised themselves originally from the state of serfs to that of freemen, as far as a Russian can be free; they have generally begun as hucksters, or perhaps shopmen, with a ticket of leave, and a condition to pay their master a certain sum annually; then they have saved money enough to buy their freedom; then saved a small capital and begun business, which has been gradually extended, till it has reached colossal proportions. One man whom I knew, who began in this way, died worth millions. Of course there are the descendants of those who commenced that still continue trade, though many of them are desirous of becoming noble, and will frequently expend fortunes that their fathers had toiled for in order to obtain some trifling rank; those who are more sensible continue to walk in their fathers' footsteps, extending their commercial relations and fortunes at the same time.

Among these men are to be found all the old customs that have now become obsolete among the nobles. The merchant class complain most bitterly of the exactions they are subjected to at hands of the authorities. Every officer of police must have his pickings out of them; one has to furnish them with cloth for their uniforms; another with sugar; a third with tea; another, again, will have to make a present of a silk dress for the wife of Jack in office, or a piece of linen for his own shirts; again, the tailors, bootmakers, and other tradesmen have to work for them; in the market they receive all the provisions they require for their household. If any one in the market should think of refusing to let the officer of police have what he likes to take, all that he may bring after that will be condemned as unfit for food. The greater the man, the larger the bribe that must be made to him.

Once I was in the cellar of a very large wine merchant, who was speaking very highly of some wine that he had by him, and regretting that the quantity was very small, when the governor of the town entered. The merchant was cap in hand to his excellency. His excellency caught sight of the wine we were speaking of at the time, and inquired what it was, when, to my great astonishment, the merchant told his excellency that it was good for nothing, and he was thinking of throwing it away, as for his own reputation he could not think of selling it.

The governor said that he was very fond of that wine, and would like to have some when a better quality arrived, which he was assured ought to come very shortly.

When his excellency was gone, I asked the merchant why he did not let him have the article he was praising so highly to me the minute before? With a knowing look he said, it was much too good for him. How so? Why, I should be

obliged to send him all I had if he once tasted it, and my customers would be obliged to wait. But I thought you kept wines to be sold? So I do, but not to be given away; for during the three years his excellency has been in town, he has always honored me with his custom, but never by paying any of his bills, which I dare not ask for; so, if I am obliged to make him a present of all the wines he may choose to consume, they shall not be of the best quality.

If any one should be found daring enough to oppose these exactions, he is subjected to a hundred petty annoyances which the police have it in their power to inflict. The street opposite his house is badly swept, and his servants are carried off, and kept for two or three days, to the great inconvenience of the master, who is eventually obliged to pay to get them discharged; then they will pretend that there is a suspicion that he has stolen goods concealed on his premises, and search for them, carrying off, perhaps, something valuable to be examined, which never comes back again; or even the master himself is sent to prison, and, though innocent, obliged to pay smartly to get out again. For all this there is no redress, so they find that the first loss is always the least.

As a proof that speculation is carried on systematically, I will cite an instance that came under my own observation. A young German officer of engineers, who was rather more scrupulous as to speculation than his brother officers, applied, after some years of useful service to the country, to his superior officer that he would present him to the Emperor as one worthy of a reward. He was answered that he should be rewarded for his application to his profession. Shortly after this he was intrusted with the construction of some extensive government works, and sent to a distant government, where he remained two or three years. On his return he presented himself to his superior, and reported that he had completed the works he had been charged to superintend, adding, that if he was thought before worthy of notice, he must be still more so now, and that his former application had never met with any encouragement for his talents; that, having completed rather an arduous task, he thought he might expect some gratification at the hands of the government.

The chief smiled, and remarked that he had already enjoyed his reward, as, having to prepare all the plans, conclude and pay all the contracts, he ought to consider himself amply rewarded.

The officer stood convinced at once, and for ever, that in the Russian service honesty was not the best policy. He is living at the present moment upon his pay, of about £75 per annum, and expending not less than £400 per annum; yet he does not make debts!

The lesson was not lost upon him. We must only take this case as one that is occurring every day, and which proves that a man ceases to become "the noblest work of God" in the holy Russian empire.

THE DESERET NEWS.

TRUTH & LIBERTY.



ALBERT CARRINGTON.....EDITOR.

GREAT SALT LAKE CITY:

Wednesday-----December 5, 1855.

News from Elders.

By letter from Elder Henry W. Miller, dated, Grand Salina, Cherokee Nation, Aug. 8, we learn that the mission under his care was well received, and had full liberty to preach as much as they pleased. Some 40 or 50 years ago a Cherokee made an alphabet for that nation; the written and printed characters are alike, and nearly all can read and write. They hold elections for officers and make their own laws, which are plain, applicable and strictly enforced. A clause in their constitution guarantees to preachers of the gospel the right to proclaim their views, and their laws impose a heavy penalty upon disturbers of religious meetings. (An example that their, professedly, more civilized neighbors would do well to pattern after.) Twenty-three persons have been baptized, one of them a Cherokee, and a branch organized, called the Cherokee Branch. There was no difficulty in getting places to preach in, or congregations to preach to.

AUSTRALIA.—Elder A. Farnham writes from Sidney, May 5, that the truth was convincing the honest in that region, and that Elder William Cook had organized a branch in New South Wales. The labors of the American elders in that region were very arduous, owing to their small number (6), and the long distances between settlements. There was quite a prospect for opening new fields, so soon as laborers could be found.

HINDOSTAN.—Br. R. Skelton, under date May 18, Calcutta, writes that he is laboring to gather out the few saints who are in that region, and probably, in a short time, that benighted people will be left to their dark and loathsome condition, from which it would seem that nothing short of the judgments of the Almighty can awaken them.

BARBISH ISLES.—Letters from American elders in England, dated July 30, and Aug. 2 and 8

bring cheering news of the sound, healthful prosperity of the work in that country; and the brethren who were sent from Utah were in the enjoyment of good health, and abundantly blessed with the Spirit, to a degree commensurate with their duties.

A general conference was held in Birmingham on the 22d, 23d, 24th and 25th of July, at which there were 19 American elders and unusually large congregations. Much good was expected to result from the teachings and Spirit there enjoyed.

ARRIVALS.—Mr. T. S. Williams of the firm of T. S. Williams & Co., merchants of this city, arrived from the East on the evening of the 28th of Nov. He left Independence on the 25th of Oct., in company with Elder Martin H. Peck and his son Edwin Peck, returning from a mission in the Eastern States, and came with them across the Plains as far as Fort Bridger, where he left them and came in alone. Elder Peck and son arrived on the 30th. They were all in good health and spirits and were not molested by the Indians on the way. They brought the sad intelligence of the death of Elder Orson Spencer, at St. Louis, on the 15th of Oct. The particulars of his sickness and decease have not been received.

Elder Amasa Lyman arrived from San Bernardino on Saturday the 1st inst., in company with Elder Burr Frost, returning from a mission in Australia, Elders William Fotheringham and Hugh Findlay from the East Indies, and several others whose names we have not learned.

SUMMARY.

[From the N. Y. Herald from July 25 to Sept. 25 inclusive.]

—Victoria and Prince Albert visited Paris on the 18th of August, and there was much parade during the few days of their stay in France.

—It is said that Spain has joined the allies.

The meagerness of this 'summary' is attributable to the noticeable items having been already received from the west, and published, and to the fact that Elder Taylor, in 'The Mormon,' carefully watches and properly handles such scurrilous articles as might, otherwise, prejudice the cause of truth.

INFORMATION WANTED, by William Weston, of Burlington, Vermont, concerning his mother, Cynthia Weston. Will some one knowing where she is, or whether living, inform Mr. Weston?

[From the Paris Constitutionnel, Aug. 7.]

The American Reaping and Mowing Machines at the Paris Exhibition.

TRIAL OF AGRICULTURAL MACHINES—TRIUMPH OF AMERICAN INGENUITY.

The second day of August having been appointed for the final trial of all the reaping and mowing machines in the Exposition, the trial accordingly came off on that day. There were ten machines in the Exposition; nine of them were sent out by the Imperial Commissioners to the place of trial, about forty miles distant.

It may here be remarked that the machines were sent out and returned free of cost to the exhibitors.

On the ground of the trial there were thousands of people assembled to witness the novelty of the day; large tents had been previously erected, and a large supply of refreshments procured for the occasion. The day was pleasant, and the excitement of the immense concourse of people intense. The police were in attendance upon horseback. The militia were in requisition with guns and bayonets to keep the crowd of eager spectators from off the grain. Stakes were driven into the ground and ropes drawn from stake to stake, until the entire field of 15 acres was completely surrounded.

This was a field of an ordinary growth of oats, and standing up well, and which was divided into lots or pieces of about an acre each, by swaths being cut through at a given distance, parallel with each other—each piece being numbered, and one machine allotted to each piece.

At the beat of the drum three machines started off together. J. S. Wright's, of Chicago, Ill., managed by his agent, Mr. Jewell; Patrick Bell's machine, by Mr. Fournet, and a machine from Algiers. These machines were calculated to do their own raking by machinery. Wright's machine cut his piece in twenty-four minutes; Bell's in sixty-six minutes, and the Algiers machine in seventy-two minutes. The raking or discharging of the grain from all of the three machines was badly done, the grain being much scattered in its delivery upon the ground; Wright's doing much the best. The cutting, however, was well done. The mechanical movement of the automatic raker of Wright's machine was truly wonderful. The operation of the machine was highly successful.

Bell's machine, by Fournet, did the cutting and gathering of the grain in a very neat manner; the grain was delivered freely to one side of the machine for the binders.

After the jurors had carefully noted the trial thus far, the signal again was given, and off started three other machines—J. H. Manny's, of Rockford, Ill., managed by Mr. Mabie; Bell's, by Crookill, and a French one horse reaper. Manny's cut its piece in twenty-two minutes; Bell's, by Crookill, and the one horse French reaper, both

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