

[From the Rome Journal.]

Extracts from Notes of Travel by the Marquis de Custine,**A Frenchman of high rank whose born passion is to travel.**

"Nothing can be more melancholy than the aspect of nature in the approach to St. Petersburg. As you advance up the Gulf, the flat marshes of Ingria terminate in a little wavering line drawn between the sky and the sea; this line is Russia. It presents the appearance of a wet lowland, with here and there a few birch trees thinly scattered. The landscape is void of objects and colors, has no bounds, and yet no sublimity. It has just light enough to be visible; the grey mossy earth well accords with the pale sun which illumines it, not from overhead, but from near the horizon, or almost indeed from below,—so acute is the angle which the oblique rays form with the surface of this unfavored soil. In Russia, the finest days have a bluish dimness. If the nights are marked by a clearness which surprises, the days are clothed with an obscurity which saddens.

"Cronstadt, with its forest of masts, its substructures, and its ramparts of granite, finely breaks the monotonous reveries of the pilgrim, who is, like me, seeking for imagery in this dreary land. I have never seen, in the approaches to any other great city, a landscape so melancholy as the banks of the Neva. The campaign of Rome is a desert, but what picturesque objects, what past associations, what light, what fire, what poetry, if I might be allowed the expression, I would say, what passion animates that religious land! To reach St. Petersburg, you must pass a desert of water framed in a desert of peat earth; sea, shore, and sky, are all blended into one mirror, but so dull, so tarnished, that it reflects nothing.

"The Finns, among whom the Russians fixed their new capital, are of Scythian origin; they are still almost Pagans—suitable inhabitants of the soil of Petersburg. It was only in 1836 that an ukase appeared, commanding their priests to add a family name to the saint's name given to their children in baptism.

"This race is almost without physiognomy. The middle of the face is flattened to a degree that renders it deformed. The men, though ugly and dirty, are said to be strong, which, however, does not prevent their being poor. Although the natives of the territory, they are seldom seen in Petersburg except upon market days. They inhabit the swamps, and slightly elevated granite hills of the environs."

Of the custom-house officers he says:

"Such numbers, acting under an influence which is not in themselves, in a manner resembling the wheel-work of a clock, are called men in Russia! The sight of these voluntary automata inspires me with a kind of fear: there is something supernatural in an individual reduced to the state of a mere machine. If, in lands where the mechanical arts flourish, wood and metal seem endowed with human powers, under despotisms, human beings seem to become as instruments of wood. We ask ourselves, what can become of their superfluity of thought? and we feel ill at ease at the idea of the influence that must have been exerted on intellectual creatures before they could have been reduced to mere things. In Russia I pity the human beings, as in England I feared the machines; in the latter country, the creations of man lack nothing but the gift of speech; here, the gift of speech is a thing superfluous to the creatures of the state.

"Those machines, clogged with the inconveniences of a soul, are, however, marvellously polite; it is easy to see they have been trained to civility, as to the management of arms, from their cradle. But of what value are the forms of urbanity when their origin savors of compulsion? The free-will of man is the consecration that can alone impart a worth or a meaning to human actions; the power of choosing a master can alone give a value to fidelity; and since, in Russia, an inferior chooses nothing, all that he says and does is worthless and unmeaning."

The Marquis thus sketches his accommodations at the first hotel of St. Petersburg:—

"After several parleys, I was at length established on the second floor, in subterranean apartments, consisting of an entree, a salon, and a bed-chamber, the whole without curtains or window blinds, though there is a sun for twenty-two hours daily above the horizon, the oblique rays of which penetrate more fully into the houses than the sun of Africa, which falls direct upon the roofs. The air of this lodging resembles that of a limekiln choked with dust and charged with exhalations of insects mingled with musk, forming altogether an atmosphere that is insupportable.

"Scarcely was I installed in this abode than (the fatigue of the night having got the better of my curiosity, which usually impels me to sally forth and lose myself in a large unknown city) I lay down, wrapped in a cloak, on an immense leather sofa, and slept profoundly during—three minutes.

"At the end of that time I woke in a fever, and on casting my eyes upon the cloak, what a sight awaited them!—a brown but living mass—things must be called by their proper name—I was covered, I was devoured by bugs. Russia is, in this respect, not a whit inferior to Spain; but in the South we can both console and secure ourselves in the open air; here we must remain imprisoned with the enemy, and the war is consequently more sanguine. I began throwing off my clothes and calling for help. What a prospect for the night! This thought made me cry out more lustily. A Russian waiter appeared. I made him understand that I wished to see his master. The master kept me waiting a long time, and when he at length did come, and was informed of the nature of my trouble, he began to laugh, and soon left the room, telling me that I should become accustomed to it, for that it was the same every where in Petersburg. He first advised me, however, never to seat myself on a Russian sofa, because the domestics, who always carry about with them legions of insects, sleep on these articles of furniture. To tranquillize me, he further stated, that the vermin would not follow me if I kept at a proper distance from the furniture in which they had fixed their abode.

"The inns of Petersburg resemble caravanserais, where the traveller is shabby housed, but not waited upon, unless by his own servants. Mine, being ignorant of the Russian language, is not only useless to me but troublesome, for I have to take care of him as well as myself!

"However, his Italian quickness soon discovered in one of the dark corridors of this walled desert, called L'Hotel

Coulon, a footman, out of place, who speaks German, and whom the keeper of the hotel recommended. I engaged him, and told him of my distress. He immediately procured for me a light iron bedstead, the mattress of which I had stuffed with the freshest straw that could be obtained, and caused the four feet to be placed in as many jars of water, in the middle of the chamber, from whence I also directed the furniture to be removed. Thus prepared for the night, I dressed, and attended by the footman, whom I had desired to forbear directing me, I issued from my magnificent hotel—a palace without, and an ornamented stable within."

In describing his first impressions of the lower classes, he remarks:—

"The men of pure Slavonian race, brought from the interior by the rich nobles, who either retain them in their service, or permit them for a certain period to carry on various trades in the city, are remarkable for their fair hair, their rosy complexions, and yet more for their perfect profiles, which equal those of Grecian statues. Their eyes have the oval Asiatic shape, with the coloring of the North; they are generally of a light blue, and unite a singular expression of gentleness, grace, and cunning. This expression, always restless, gives to the iris those changing hues which vary from the green of the serpent, and the grey of the cat, to the black of the gazelle, though the ground color still remains blue. The mouth, adorned with a golden and silky moustache, is beautifully formed and the teeth have a brilliant whiteness that lights up the whole countenance. They are sometimes sharp and pointed, when they resemble those of the tiger, but more commonly their shape is perfectly regular. The costume of these men is always original. It consists either of the Greek tunic, with a lively-colored girdle, the Persian robe, or the short Russian pelisse lined with sheepskin, the wool of which is turned outwards or inwards according to the season.

"The females of the lower orders are less handsome; but few are met in the streets, and those few present few attractions: they appear degraded and stupidified. It is a singular fact, that the men take pains with their dress, and the women neglect it; this is perhaps owing to the former being attached by service to the houses of the nobles. The latter have a clumsy gait; they wear heavy boots, which deform the foot: their figures are without elegance; and their complexions unlike those of the men, lose all freshness and clearness even while they are yet young. Their little Russian coats, short, and open before, are trimmed with fur, which is almost always hanging in rags. This costume would be pretty if it was less shabby, and if the effect was not generally spoiled by deformity or revolting dirtiness of person. The national head-dress of the Russian women is handsome, but it has become rare, being now only worn, I am told, by nurses, and by the ladies of the court on days of ceremony. It is a species of pasteboard tower, gilt embroidered, and much widened at the top."

"Among all the women of the lower orders whom I have hitherto met in the streets, not a single one has struck me as possessing beauty, and the greater number among them are ugly and dirty to a degree that is repulsive. Astonishment is excited by the recollection that they are the wives and mothers of men with features so fine and regular, profiles so perfectly Grecian, and forms so elegant and supple as those seen among even the lowest classes of the nation. There are nowhere old men so handsome, nor old women so hideous as in Russia. I have seen few of the citizens' wives. One of the singularities of Petersburg is, that the number of women in proportion to that of the men is less than in other capitals. I am assured that the former do not, at the utmost, form more than a third of the total population of the city. Their scarcity causes them to be only too highly prized. They attract so eager an attention that there are few who risk themselves alone after a certain hour, in the streets of the less populous quarters. In the capital of a country altogether military, and among a people addicted to drunkenness, this discreteness appears to me sufficiently well founded. At all times the Russian women show themselves less in public than the French: it is not necessary to go far back to find the time when they passed their lives like the women of Asia. This reserve, the remembrance of which still lingers, recalls, like so many other Russian customs, the origin of the people. It contributes to the dulness of the streets and the fetes of Petersburg."

SKETCH OF THE EMPEROR.

"The predominant expression of his countenance is that of a restless severity, which strikes a beholder at the first glance, and, in spite of the regularity of his features, conveys by no means a pleasant impression. Physiognomists pretend, with much reason, that the hardness of the heart injures the beauty of the countenance. Nevertheless, this expression in the Emperor Nicholas appears to be the result of experience rather than the work of nature. By what long and cruel sufferings must not a man have been tortured, when his countenance excites fear, notwithstanding the voluntary confidence that noble features inspire!

"Nevertheless, at times some gleams of softness temper the imperious looks of this monarch; and then, the expression of affability reveals all the native beauty of his classic features. In the heart of the husband and the father, humanity triumphs for a moment over the policy of the prince. When the sovereign rests from his task of imposing the yoke upon his subjects, he appears happy. This combat between the primitive dignity of the man and the affected gravity of the sovereign, appears to me worthy the attention of an observer: it occupied mine the greater part the time I passed in the chapel.

"The Emperor is above the usual height by half a head; his figure is noble, although a little stiff; he has practised from his youth the Russian custom of girding the body above the joints to such a degree as to push up the stomach into the chest, which produces an unnatural swelling or extension about the ribs that is as injurious to health as it is ungraceful in appearance.

"This voluntary deformity destroys all freedom of movement, impairs the elegance of the shape, and imparts an air of constraint to the whole person. They say that when the Emperor loosens his dress, the viscera, suddenly giving way, are disturbed for a moment, in their equilibrium, which produces an extraordinary prostration of strength. The bowels may be displaced,—they cannot be got rid of.

"The Emperor has a Grecian profile, the forehead high, but receding; the nose straight and perfectly formed; the mouth very fairly cut; the face, which in shape is rather

a long oval, is noble; the whole air military, and rather German than Slavonic. His carriage and his attitudes are naturally imposing. He expects always to be gazed at, and never for a moment forgets that he is so. It may even be said that he likes this homage of the eyes.

"He passes the greater part of his existence in the open air, at reviews, or in rapid journeys. During summer, the shade of his military hat draws across his forehead an oblique line, which marks the action of the sun upon the skin. It produces a singular effect but is not disagreeable, as the cause is at once perceived.

"In examining attentively the fine person of this individual, on whose will hangs the fate of so many others, I have remarked, with involuntary pity, that he cannot smile at the same time with the eyes and the mouth; a want of harmony which denotes perpetual constraint, and which makes one remember, with regret, that easy natural grace, so conspicuous in the less regular but more agreeable countenance of his brother, the Emperor Alexander. The latter always pleasing, had yet, at times, an assumed manner. The Emperor Nicholas is more sincere; but he has an habitual expression of severity, which sometimes gives the idea of harshness and inflexibility. If, however, he is less fascinating, he is more firm than his late brother; but then, it must be added, that he has also a proportionately greater need of firmness. Graceful courtesy insures authority by removing the desire of resistance. This judicious economy in the exercise of power is a secret of which the Emperor Nicholas is ignorant; he is one who desires to be obeyed where others desire to be loved."

At the matrimonial ceremonies, in the morning at the Imperial chapel, and in the evening (festa) at the Palace, our traveler says:—

"We observed in the suite of the Emperor, habited in a long robe of gold tissue, and a pointed bonnet, likewise adorned with gold embroidery, Tartan Khan who is half tributary, and half independent of Russia. This petty sovereign had come to pay the Emperor of all the Russias to admit among his pages a son twelve years old whom he had brought to St. Petersburg, hoping thus to secure for the child a suitable destiny. The presence of this declining power served as a contrast to that of the successful monarch, and reminded me of the triumphal pomps of Rome.

"The first ladies of the Russian court, and the wives of the ambassadors of the other courts, among whom I recognized Mademoiselle Sontag, now Comtesse de Rossi, graced with their presence the circumference of the chapel. At the lower end which terminated in a brilliant painted rotunda, were ranged the whole of the Imperial family."

"Among these thousand, all more or less blazing with gold and diamonds, was the Khan of the Kirgises, whom I had seen at the chapel in the morning. I remarked also an old Queen of Georgia, who had been dethroned thirty years previously. The poor woman languished unhonored, at the court of her conqueror. Her face was tanned like that of a man's used to the fatigues of the camp, and her attire was ridiculous. We are too ready to laugh at misfortune when it appears under a form that does not please us. We should wish to see a Queen of Georgia rendered more beautiful by her distress; but I here saw just the contrary; and when the eyes are displeased, the heart soon becomes unjust. It was not generous, but I confess I could not help smiling to see a royal head crowned with a kind of shako, from whence hung a very odd-looking veil. All the other ladies wore trains; but the queen of the East had on a short embroidered petticoat. There was much of the worn-out and wearied courtier in her expression, and her features were ugly. The national dress of the Russian ladies at court is antique and striking. They wear on the head a kind of a tower, formed of rich stuff, and somewhat resembling in shape the crown of a man's hat lowered in height and open at the top. This species of diadem is generally embroidered with jewels; it is very ancient, and imparts an air of nobleness and originality to handsome persons, while it singularly enhances the ugliness of plain ones. Unfortunately, these last are very numerous at the Russian court, whence people seldom retire, except to die, so attached are the aged courtiers to the posts which they there hold. In general, female beauty is rare at Petersburg; but among the higher classes, the charm of graceful manners often supplies the want of elegant forms and regular features. There are, however, a few Georgian women who unite the two advantages. These females shine amid the women of the North, like stars in the profound darkness of a Southern night. The shape of the court robes, with their long sleeves and trains, gives to the whole person an Oriental aspect which in a large assembly thus robed, has a very imposing effect."

THE SLAVES IN RUSSIA.

"A Russian of the lower class is as often beaten as saluted. The lifting of the rod (in Russia, is a large split cane), and the lifting of the hat, are means employed in about equal measure, in the social education of this people. Beating in Russia can only be applied to certain classes, and by men of certain other classes. Here, ill-treatment is regulated like the tariff of a custom-house: it reminds us of the code of Ivan. The dignity of caste is admitted, but no one dreams of the dignity of man. The reader will recollect what I have already said of the politeness of the Russians of all ranks, and is of real value; I will now confine myself to relating one or two of the illustrative scenes that pass daily before my eyes.

"I have seen, in the same street, two drivers of droshkies ceremoniously lift their hats in passing each other:—this is a common custom; if acquainted, they lift their hand to their mouth with an amicable smile, and kiss it, making at the same time a little expressive and intelligent sign with the eyes. So much for politeness.

"A little farther on, I have seen a courier, a feldjager, or some other government servant, descend from his vehicle, and running to one of these well-bred coachmen, strike him brutally and unmercifully with whip, stick, or fist, in the breast, the face, or on the head, which punishment the unlucky wight, who had not made way in sufficient haste, received without the least complaint or resistance, out of respect to the uniform and the caste of his tormentor, whose anger, however, is not always in such cases promptly disarmed by the submission of the delinquent.

"I have seen one of these carriers of despatches, the courier of some minister, or the valet-de-chambre of some aid-de-camp of the Emperor's, drag from his seat a young coachman, and never cease striking him until he had

covered his face with blood. The victim submitted to the torture like a real lamb, without the least resistance, and in the same manner as one would yield to some inevitable commotion of nature. The passers-by were in no degree moved or excited by the cruelty; and one of the comrades of the sufferer, who was watering his horses a few steps off, obedient to a sign of the enraged feldjager, approached to hold his horses' bridle during the time that he was pleased to prolong the punishment. In what other country could a man of the lower orders be found who would assist in the infliction of an arbitrary punishment upon one of his companions?

"The scene in question took place in the final part of the city, and at the busiest hour. When the unfortunate man was released, he wiped away the blood, which streamed down his cheeks, remounted his seat, and recommenced his bows and salutations as usual. It should be recollected that this abomination was enacted in the midst of a silent crowd."

[From the California Farmer.]

Experiments in Wheat Culture.

A well known English agricultural writer, Cuthbert W. Johnson, in an article on the Wheat crop, in the September number of the Farmer's Magazine, says:

Now there are one or two facts which have been produced within the last two or three years, which are well worthy of the farmer's attention—not as offering certain rules for our imitation on all soils and in every situation, but as affording valuable suggestion for new experimental courses of inquiry. It is pretty certain that the best state to which the soil should be brought for the reception of the seed wheat, is not in all cases well determined. At the July gathering at Mr. Mechi's farm, some fine specimens of wheat ears were produced by Mr. Piper, of Colne Engaine, grown on land which had not been plowed for several years, and yet had, with the aid of top-dressings of soot and other artificial manures, produced good crops of wheat every year: here was the result from an undisturbed soil. On the other hand, we have the equally successful, yet opposite practice of Mr. Smith, of Lois Weedon, who follows for wheat every other year—still growing wheat and wheat only, year after year. His practice he briefly describes as follows: "I divide my field into lands five feet wide. In the centre of each land I drop or drill my seed in triple rows, one foot apart, thus leaving a fallow interval of three feet between each triple row. When the plant is up, I trench the intervals with the fork easily, taking my spits about three inches from the wheat; and at spring and during summer I clean them with the blades of the sharp-cutting horse-hoe, and keep them open with the tines of the scuffle. Every year, in short, I trench and cultivate two and a half feet of the five for the succeeding crop, and leave the other two and a half for that which is growing. One moiety of each acre is thus in wheat, and the other moiety fallow; and the average yield of that half acre is thirty-four bushels, surpassing the average yield of a whole acre on the common plan." Why wheat should be thus grown for a series of years on the same land with success in Essex, and Northamptonshire, and in one place by constantly stirring the soil, and in the other locality by never plowing, but by merely hoeing the seed in; and hoeing it afterwards for the removal of weeds, certainly seems to be phenomena worthy of our careful study, when we are considering the state of the soil the best adapted for the growth of wheat.

One of the Springs.

The springs of Florida are among its most peculiar and attractive features. The Orange and the Silver Springs, in the eastern part of the State, one of them surrounded with an orange forest, and possessing the magic property of giving a white coating to the turtles and alligators that live in it, would repay the lover of nature for a long pilgrimage; but Wakulla Fountain surpasses them in every particular, and will hereafter live in memory with the Saguenay river, Niagara Falls, the Mammoth Cave, and Tallulah Chasaw. An adequate idea of this mammoth spring could never be given by pen or pencil; but when once seen, on a bright calm day, it must ever after be a thing to dream and love. It is the fountain head of a river which is twenty miles long, empties into the Gulf of Mexico, and is of sufficient volume to float a steamboat, if such an affair had yet dared to penetrate this solemn wilderness. It swells up in the very heart of a dense cypress swamp, is nearly round in shape, measures some four hundred feet in diameter, and is in depth about one hundred and fifty feet, having at its bottom an immense horizontal chasm, with a dark portal, from one side of which looms up a limestone cliff, the summit of which is itself nearly fifty feet beneath the spectator who gazes upon it from the sides of a tiny boat. The water thereof is so astonishingly clear that even a pin can be seen on the bottom in the deepest places, and of course every animate and inanimate object which it contains is fully exposed to view. The apparent color of the water from the shore is greenish, but as you look perpendicularly into it, it is colorless as air, and the sensation of floating upon it is that of being suspended in a balloon; and the water is so refractive that when the sun shines brilliantly every object you see is enveloped in the most fascinating prismatic hues. It contains a great variety of serpent like plants, and its mossy looking bottoms resemble the finest carpet, with white ground and fantastic figures of every possible color. It abounds in fish,—the bream, the sucker, the chub, and the shiner; and it seems to me that I can now recall every individual to mind as a personal acquaintance. They at times made the surface of the water alive with their gambols; they swam about their beautiful home in schools and singly, some of them watching our boat with curious looks, and others perfectly indifferent to our presence or movements. On dropping a sixpence into the water a couple of them followed it in its zig-zag course to the bottom, pushed it with their snouts, and then scornfully turned tail upon it; and it was a most novel and interesting sight to see an occasional fellow floating gently up the sides of the cliff, from the deep chasm below, as if himself astonished that such fine scenery should exist so far under the surface of his native element. It was also very strange to witness the shadow which our little boat cast upon the bottom, which seemed to be refreshing to some of the fish that floated into it, but was not liked apparently by the alligators and huge turtles that went crawling along their sub-marine highway. A rim of rank grass and lilies surrounds the entire fountain, and at the foot of the numerous and gigantic cypress trees, al-