

LETTER FROM EMPIRE OF THE CZAR

The Red Cross in Russia and the Grand Duchess Elizabeth—Educational System of the Empire—The Chin-Graduation of Rank—Russian Nihilism and a Gagged Press—The Cossacks Unequal to the Japanese.

For many years the people of Russia had contributed money to the Red Cross society of that country, and for building new battleships, until the amount given had reached the great figures of twenty-three million rubles. When the war with Japan commenced the astonishing fact was disclosed that the treasury contained only three million rubles. The affair was quickly hushed up on account of distinguished personages being connected with the disgraceful situation. These men had borrowed money from the Red Cross and had failed to meet their indebtedness. They are not at the seat of war in the East, and cannot be spared to be brought back to Russia, so the necessary steps leading to the identification of those implicated cannot be taken until the trouble with Japan is over. However, it is well known that the guilty parties are ranked so high in social and governmental life that nothing will be done which would reveal their connection with the deplorable event—one more outrage against the people will pass unnoticed. The Grand Duchess Elizabeth is the leading lady of Moscow, and is not only the most influential one, but the most popular. She is a sister of the Empress of Russia and is married to Grand Duke Serge, who is an uncle of the Czar. Under her direction a work for the sick and wounded Russian soldiers has been organized and is now in the strength of its activity. Although it was her desire to have nothing to do with the Red Cross since it fell into disrepute, yet the goods that are being sent out continually under her supervision bear the significant emblem which has made that society a famous factor in the world's life of helpfulness. The magnificent royal palace at Moscow, with its five hundred rooms, has been transformed into a workshop. These bales of material are deposited and made into clothing and hospital supplies. The labor is performed by women whose services are volunteered and who receive no reward. As many as eight hundred meet at the palace every day to stitch, to bind lint and to pack the articles for shipment. The apartments are filled with sewing machines and tables for cutting. The sumptuous reception hall, which has formerly been used for splendid social functions by the ladies of the court, is piled with bolts of cloth and garments newly made. Bending over the machines and standing at the tables, are women of every rank in Russia; side by side with the titled ladies of the nobility are the tradeswomen and the plain peasants. A mutual sorrow has made comrades of them all. In a room apart from the rest sits the grand duchess, acting as secretary, giving receipts for all the gifts and meeting the donors in person. Her strong coadjutor is the Countess Clouffieva, lady in waiting to the grand duchess, who is also loved by the people for her beneficence. Since the organization of this relief work for the Russian soldiers, over three million rubles have been contributed. Nurses in the government hospitals at St. Petersburg are in special training for service on the battlefields. Many of them have gone to Japan and lately to Moscow, where they nursed the Japanese prisoners of the highest rank who were carried there.

Petersburg a school of medicine for women. Besides these there are the large, imperial schools, called institutes, which are also distinctively for young women. The students are all dressed in uniform; when they go home they are allowed to leave it off, but when returning, it must again be donned. The fee paid upon entering covers the expense of the wardrobe. These imperial schools have been endowed by an emperor or empress and usually bears his or her name. Some of them are set apart for the nobility. None of these institutions are very recent, as can be seen in the uniform. The dresses are very simple and coarse, cut décolleté and worn with white cuffs and aprons. The same costume is used by the students among the nobility as by the pupils from the common people. In every school in Russia a priest comes once a day and teaches the ritual and the meaning of the vestments. While the ignorance throughout the country is wide-spread, yet, as a rule, town children know how to read and write. No fault can be found with the universities of Russia. The expense of attending them is very low and the system of education adopted by them most admirable. The students are allowed to live anywhere they please. Moscow has five thousand, and there are many thousands in St. Petersburg, which is the center of the university life of Russia. The fees amounting to not more than sixty rubles a year, or \$30 in American money, attract an enormous number of students. Scores of peasants attend the universities—a laundress in Moscow keeps her son at the highest institution of learning in that city. The inducements held out to men in that grade of life are very strong, not only does a boy pass from the peasant class when he finishes at the university, but he no longer has to carry a peasant's passport.

The Chin—Graduation of Rank.

Every one who serves in Russia, of any sort, is on the steps of the official ladder. "Jen" is the term used by them, meaning graduation of rank. In English it is "chin." For instance, a lieutenant makes for himself about the twelfth or thirteenth chin. When he becomes a colonel, he has reached the eighth, when a general the fourth. When he gets to be a noble, he becomes an hereditary nobleman; that is, all of his descendants are also noble forever. The system was devised by Peter the Great. Upon his ascent to the throne, he found existing a vast number of persons living on landed estates. He wanted to enlist them in the service of the empire, so he resorted to the chin process in order to gain them. There is more honor attached to serving the state than in being a prince. More attention is paid to him who has attained through personal effort than to the one who has merely inherited for-

tune and a title. The boy who finishes at the university has gotten to the thirteenth chin—college assessor—a great step up. Then, when he enters any public service, the army, the navy, the custom house, he becomes a civil general. When one gets to thirteenth chin he enters the personal nobility; that is he is a noble, but not his descendants. When the thirteenth chin is reached the person is entitled to have a prolix attached to his name of "High, Well-Born." When he reaches the rank of general he has the title of "Prevoskhoditelstvo" (His Excellency). His children belong to the untitled nobility. Since the time of Peter the Great titles have become somewhat discredited. Many of the proudest families of Russia have no titles, and would not have one under any consideration; for example, the Lvoffs, Leontieffs and Glyeboffs. Even before Peter the Great, however, there was this untitled nobility. Each son and daughter in a titled family inherits the title. If the women remain unmarried, they hold it all their lives; but if they enter into marriage with untitled men their title is forfeited. The sons hand down theirs to the sons throughout the generations. There are hundreds of men in Russia who bear the title of Prince Galitzin; there is an immense family of them. Some of these princes are among the highest persons in the empire; others are of the poorest—many being found listed with the most poverty-stricken farmers. The title brings them into ridicule, especially with the laboring classes, who think much more of a millionaires than they do of a titled person.

Russian Nihilism.

Regardless of the advantages attached to the chin, there are thousands of men in Russia, who, after being educated, have no career opened to them, for the governmental places and others are soon filled, so they grow discontented. The universities have become the centers of unrest—the fountain-heads of the nihilism—consequently, the students are kept under the strictest surveillance. If five get together, they are surrounded by the police; but the passion for liberty has taken such a strong hold upon their hearts that they are willing to run every risk to promulgate their ideas, and when discovered to suffer any punishment for their sake. Numbers of students work incognito in the factories, so as to imbue the laborers with their principles. When their identity becomes known, they are arrested and disappear—no trial ever held. The light cases are sent to Siberia; the others to the fortress in St. Petersburg, where they die, for the prison is in a very unsanitary condition—damp and cold. Often several hundred students are arrested at one time, marched

through the streets and placed in some large building temporarily, then as usual, without trial, for Russia has no courts as we know them, there follows a repetition of the old story. The political cases are adjudicated by the police. The governor of Moscow is allowed to arrest any one he pleases and send him away without a trial. Socialism in Russia takes the form of Nihilism. This is the result of force of circumstances. There is no freedom of utterance; no meetings are allowed to be held by those who are inclined to a radical turn of thought; the press is throttled, so opposition takes the form of violence. The Nihilists are almost wholly the poor students; the rich ones are satisfied. The vast majority of the former belong to the peasant class. The students constitute the educated, coming Russia. A sociologist, with these facts in hand, is prepared to draw some tremendous conclusions in reference to the future of the mighty empire upon which the gaze of the world is at present fixed.

A Gagged Press.

When students are arrested, no mention is made of the fact in the press; all information concerning such matters has to come from English and American papers, for those of Russia are absolutely gagged. Every paper and magazine that finds its way to the postoffices from foreign countries is thoroughly read by the government inspectors, and every article which criticizes Russia in the least degree, or announces events derogatory to its policy, is rolled through a printing press, and blotted out. It is a common thing to see whole columns a mass of black. The Russians are thus kept in complete ignorance of what atrocities occur in their own country; but when the English and Americans living there find the blotted-out pages in their papers, they at once write home and get their friends to send them the proscribed articles in a letter. In this way they keep informed. In a pension lately in Moscow there was a company of young men hailing from France, Greece, Persia and some were Russians. They all said to me, "We are in utter ignorance concerning what is transpiring in this country. Can you tell us anything?" Letters are inspected as they pass through the mails, and if there are any which are found to be objectionable, they are promptly burned. This severe espionage is kept up all along the line. Every movement is watched; especially those of strangers. While going through the magnificent picture galleries at the Winter Palace not long since, I stopped before a great war piece and was describing in my note book, the scene depicted on the canvass. The guide who accompanied me stepped to my side and said, "Madame, you are writing too much. We are surrounded by

guards. They tell me that they object to your taking notes. They fear that you are making sketches of forts from these war paintings to be sent to the Japanese." Later, while looking at the royal equipages in the carriage museum, I again took out my note book and was immediately requested by the guards there, through my guide, not to attempt to write in the building. Afterwards my conductor informed me that if I should be seen upon the streets writing in a note book that I would, in all probability, be instantly arrested. If a member of a family in Russia is connected with the Socialist or Nihilist cause, the rest are powerless to help him. If the member disappears, little satisfaction is gained. There are no revolutionary ideas at all among the uneducated peasants—no such thought has yet reached the actual peasant class. Their ignorance is so deep that it will take some time for the rays of radicalism to pierce the mental darkness in which they dwell. The students turn to the factory hands for the reception of their propaganda. The devotion of the young people of Russia to the cause of freedom is marvelous, and furnishes the most sublimely heroic feature of the age. It is high tragedy from the beginning and each one knows what the result of discovery means—banishment, imprisonment, death; and yet they enter the arena unflinchingly—not only the men but the women. Corresponding with the university course for men are the higher courses for women, the students of which are called "Kursistki," meaning those who are following a course. These young women are imbued with the same spirit as that which prompts their fellowmen, students to deeds of self-sacrifice. They enter the work of dissemination of revolutionary tenets among the women, the girls take part and are often arrested. When the student riots occurred in St. Petersburg a few years ago, the young women who were connected with it were flogged as the men were by the Cossacks that were sent to quell the insurrection.

The Cossacks.

While the Cossacks are Russians in a certain way, yet they form a different class, and are in reality a separate people. Their sentiments are not the same, there is no feeling of friendship or kinship with the Russians, and that fact makes them ready tools for the use of the government. They are a semimilitary race, holding their land and possessing stated privileges under military tenure—every man having to be a soldier.

There is not a political party in Russia. Of course there is no parliament. There is one liberal paper, but it is stopped whenever the authorities choose to interfere with its policy. The Czar is, presumably, the head of the government and appoints his ministers. Each branch of the imperial government devises laws for the empire. Theoretically the Czar creates all statutes, practically the ministers. One will present this, another that, then the Czar accepts or suggests a different thing. Russia is not an autocracy, but a bureaucracy. The ministers appoint their underlings and there is no end of intrigue. It is to the interest of the ministers to keep

many things from the Czar. Each one is independent and responsible to the emperor only. It would take a giant intellectually and physically to rule Russia in a way that would commend itself to a civilized world. The Czar would have to be a first-class admiral, an able general, a great lawyer, an astute economist and past-master in diplomacy. The Czar is a small man physically, measuring only five feet six inches and a half. He possesses no intellectual ability, and although a well-meaning man, with a good heart and clean morals, he can be truthfully regarded in no other light than that of a weak character. All power in Russia circles about the minister of the interior, but the body of Grand Dukes really constitute the head of the government. They form a masterful nucleus; to oppose them means annihilation—not only for the people, but the Emperor. It can never be forgotten that Alexander the Second's method of freeing the serfs, and instituting other reforms was bitterly opposed by the Grand Dukes, and that they were the instigators of his assassination and not the nihilists. Alexander the Third had a policy which was quite reactionary—the opposite of his father's. The Grand Dukes can't be tried; they are a part of the system of government. Their logic is that if they should be attacked the foundations of the Emperor's throne would suffer violence. If the Czar should appeal to the people, he would be destroyed. The only hope is that the army will refuse to go with the present system and side with the people. Then would come a collapse of the whole governmental structure. The policy of the revolutionists during the last few years is to leave the Emperor alone and strike at the ministers. Each man who has the place of Minister of the Interior holds it at the risk of his life; but all the ministers have been threatened. It gives one an uncanny sensation as he goes about St. Petersburg to hear persons say continually: "That church rests on the spot where Alexander the Second was assassinated. That lamp post marks the place where the minister was lately murdered. That hotel is where the young student was killed by the dynamite which he was preparing to throw at the minister when the Czar and his officials should be passing by to review the troops. That is the point in the yard at the Winter Palace where the three cases of dynamite were found which had been secretly slipped in to kill the Emperor." The Czar is the loneliest man in the world today and the one most to be pitied. He is closed about by a living fortress, but whom, after all can he trust? Peterhof is the seat of the Emperor's summer residence. It is out by train a short distance from St. Petersburg. From the station there is a beautiful drive through woods until the little village is reached. In a handsome park, upon its outskirts, are the buildings where the Czar and his entire suite live for a certain length of time each year. On all sides are officers and guards. At the point where the little chapel stands in which the Crown Prince was lately baptized, a winding road leads through a forest to a ledge of land washed by the Gulf of Finland. There is the Czar's

(Continued to page 10.)

Every pound of Cascade Butter is guaranteed. We never had a pound returned. It tastes good, keeps indefinitely and is made fresh every day. What more can you ask for? Order of your grocer.

Cascade

PASTEURIZED

BUTTER

CASCADE BUTTER is Full Weight. Butter at present is worth almost 2 1-2c an oz. You might buy a pound of dairy butter for 5c less than CASCADE, but if it is 2 oz. short weight, how much do you save?