

ELKS OFF TO METROPOLIS

HILARIOUS ENTERTAINMENT GIVEN THE VISITORS.

Automobile Rides Through Orchard Districts Make Program.

Elaborate entertainment was extended to several hundred Elks and their wives yesterday when the Omaha special and one Idaho train were halted here long enough to permit the La Grande Elks to extend the glad hand of fellowship in the way of an automobile ride. It was a hilarious crowd that piled off the trains and about all the machines in the city were pressed into service to get the visitors out over the valley. This was early in the day and the splendor of the thing was slightly dampened by a downpour of rain which ended in time, however, to get the visitors back to the train without much mud baths. The Omaha Elks declared that La Grande was the only city en route that had offered greetings to them since they left their home state. Many other trains stopped here briefly, one from Wichita, Kansas, being among them.

La Grande Special Goes.

A special train with as fine appointment as ever graced a special run out of this city, carried about 200 from La Grande at 8:30 last night. The La Grande band precluded its departure with a short program at the depot. A great portion of the many Elks will remain in Portland until the close of the present week.

KNOUT AND NAME

About All That Now Remain of the Original Cossacks.

CODE OF THE FIRST TRIBES.

One Class Lived in the Villages, the Other in a Sort of Monastery, and All Were Free Warriors, Self Appointed Guardians of the People.

Wherever Russia has a fight on hand there bobs up promptly to do her bidding the Cossack. This right arm of the czar has not the best of reputations. Illustrated papers picture him a savage scarecrow mounted on a wiry looking animal, and his chief occupation is apparently the knighting and knouting of harmless people. Yet he comes of good stock.

Once upon a time there drifted into southwest Russia a tribe of runaways who called themselves "Kossaki," which is Tartar for free men, free warriors or guardians. Seemingly they lived up to the name. They protected from the Tartars the peoples in the countries which they originally had fled from and saved thousands of Russian women and children from slavery in Turkey. Growing in numbers and importance, these self appointed guardian angels became everywhere feared and respected. Their military services especially were in request. And nation

could command their help if its cause appealed to the Kossaki code of honor. The tribe had gradually resolved itself into two classes—the village Kossaki, who lived in their own settlements all over southern Russia, and the inhabitants of the "Setch beyond the rapids." The former had the advantage over other country folk, as neighboring governments were too afraid to tax them. Between wars, to which the call came from the Setch, the village Kossaki tilled the land. Of an altogether different character was the organization of this Setch, a community of about 12,000 men with permanent headquarters in a movable settlement (the exact location was changed eight times in two centuries), usually on an unapproachable island on the lower course of the Dnieper. The Turks once tried to rush the place but got caught in the maze of islands like rats in a trap.

The Setch in one respect resembled a monastery. No woman was allowed inside it. A man might not even bring his mother or his sister. If he did he was hanged. Here, eager to lead the free and simple life among their equals, came all sorts and conditions of men. Indeed, owing to the law enforcing celibacy, the colony depended for its numbers on newcomers, although the village Kossaki contributed recruits. Any one could join, as rank and riches were despised, and all he had to do was to submit to laws as follows: Chastity, the orthodox creed, allegiance to Russia and the south Russian dialect. No reference or inconvenient questions of his past were asked of the intending Kossak. He simply went to the elected chief and, after a brief greeting, was shown to his place in one of the "kuren," or big huts. "Here is thy home, three paces long and two paces wide, and when thou shalt die we will make it smaller."

They had good times, though, in the Setch. There were no maneuvers, no organized training, no compulsory drill. Men lay or slept in the leveled spaces between huts, enjoying, gypsy fashion, the freedom of the open air. Drink was plentiful and also tobacco. Great songs were sung, and there was much playing of stringed instruments. Throughout the place a spirit of good comradeship prevailed. A popular pastime was dancing, no easy task in cumbersome high boots. Costumes were of a picturesque variety.

The Kossak wore a mustache and on the crown of his head a lonesome wisp of hair, both being worn long to enable him to wind the three ends round his ears. Each man went armed to the teeth, and the majority carried "uagalkas" (whips which are still used).

In wartime things were different. To drink was a crime. Food, always plain, consisted of rations of uncooked horseflesh. Military organization was by election of leaders, one to every 100 men, with a colonel in command of a regiment. These officers had absolute power, but authority for only one campaign. Such war spells were of frequent occurrence, so much so that the fighting business led to the extinction of the tribe. Peter the Great laid waste the Setch. Mazeppa made himself unpleasant. The Setch was again bombarded and ruined when its inhabitants became, some of them, plow men, while others were shipped to the orient. True, there was a brief reappearance of the Setch, but under different auspices and nothing like in old times. Finally the Kossaki lands were confiscated, and the tribe and its institutions gave place to serfdom and the creation of a new nobility. The Cossack of today inherits little of the old traditions but the name and the whip.—Harper's Weekly.

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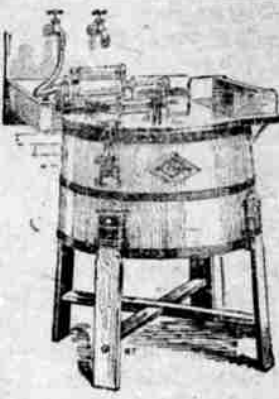
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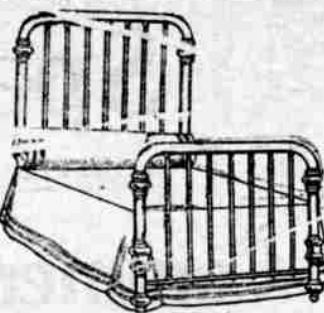
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