## Current Miterature.

AT FREIBURG GATES.

Softly the warm rain pattered down, As we crossed the bridge and the hillside steep.

And came to the gates of the quaint old town,

Nestled close in the valley deep.

Men and women along the way, Tree and flower and fence and wall, Shrines for the weary to kneel and pray, Strange and charming were each and all.

Scampering out from the archway old, Children danced in a noisy band, With cries and antics manifold, Each entreating with open hand.

Into a storm of pleading they broke, Not to be slighted and not to be stayed; Very poor were the little folk, Very eager they begged and prayed.

Out of a picture of Teniers' they With life and motion seemed to have stepped:

The eldest boy, in a coat of gray, Caped and hooded, close to us crept.

And into his hand we straightway slipped A bright new silver groschen fair, Away to the edge of the road he slipped To look at his treasure in quiet there.

Never in all his life before Had such a treasure been his keep; And he turned the won-lerful money o'er In a daze of joy-did he wake or sleep?

His heavy, round, dull turnip-face Broke into a smile from ear to ear, Still as a stone he stood for a space-You never saw aught so droll and queer.

And swift he ran, like a thing possessed, Till he came to a statue close to the wall The Holy Mary, who stood and blessed Every one passing her, great or small.

Bown before her he went, and then In twenty somersets, round and round, Tumbled this queerest of little men, In a rapture of espera all over the ground

Never a word to us did he say, Not, I'm sure, that he meant to be rude, But that was his very curious way Of showing his joy and his gratitude,

To the H-ly Mary he took it all, She had on him that gift bestowed; So he rolled at her feet like a human ball, And darted off down the dripping road.

Often that picture does memory paint, And I stand with the strange little crowd again,

And laugh to think of the scene so quaint, At Freiburg gates in the pouring rain. -Celia Thaster in February Wide Awake.

#### The Story of Catherine.

Peter the great, who was born in Moscow, on June 10, 1672, and died in St. Petersburg, on Feb. 8, 1725, was the Emperor who in a few years changed Russia from a country of half-savage tribes into a great European nation. He saw in his house a young girl, who at- faced his enemies. tracted his attention by her beauty and graceful manners. This girl was a living as a sort of servant and housekeeper in the family of the Russian officer. She had been taken prisoner when the lown she lived in was captured. Nobody knows, even to this day, exactly who she was, except that she was a poor orphan girl, who had been brought up by a village clergyman; but it is to be believed that her father was a Livonian peasant.

Martha's beauty and the brightness of her mind pleased the Emperor so much that after a while he made up his mind to marry her, in spite of her humble origin. Peter was in the habit of doing pretty much as he pleased, whether his mobles liked it or not, but even he dared not make a captive peasant girl the Empress of Russia. He therefore married her privately, in the presence of a few of his nearest friends, who were sharged to keep the secret. Before the marriage took place, he had Martha haptized in the Russian Church and changed her name to Catherine.

Now, Peter had a bad habit of losing his temper, and getting so angry that he feli into fits. As he was an absolute monarch, and could do whatever he liked, it was very dangerous for anybody to go near him when he was angry. He could have a head chopped off as easily as he could order his breakfast. But he was very fond of Catherine, and she was the only person who was not in the least afraid of him. She soon learned how to manage him, and even in his worst fits she could soothe and quiet the old bear.

Peter was nearly always at war, and in spite of the hardships and dangers of the battle-field, Catherine nearly always marched with him at the head of the army. The soldiers wondered at her bravery, and learned to like her more han anybody else. If food was scarce lie roads rough, and the marches long, hey remembered that Catherine was with them, and were ashamed to grumble. Her first difficulty was with Peter himself. She could not offer terms of peace to the Turks until Peter gave her leave, and promised to fullfill whatever bargain she might make with them. She per box. For sale by Pert & Son. 19

face the dangers, they thought rough managed this part of the matter, and soldiers ought not to complain.

Catherine was a wise woman, as well as a brave one. She soon learned as much of the art of war as Peter knew. and in every time of doubt or difficulty her advice was asked, and her opinion counted for as much as if she had been one of the generals. Atter she had thus kish commander without sending him shown how able a woman she was, and had won the friendship of everybody

This was in the year 1711, and im-mediaiely afterward Peter marched into first got together all her own jewels, and the Turkish country at the head of 40, then went to all the officers' wives and 000 men. This army was not nearly large asked each of them for whatever she had enough to meet the Turks, but Peter had that was valuable—money, jewels and armies in different places, and ordered all of them to meet him on the march. all of them to meet him on the march. for what she took, and promised to pay For various reasons all these armies failed to join him, and he found himself in a Turkish province with a very small in this way throughout the camp, and number of troops. The danger was so great that he ordered Catherine and all the other women to go back to a place of safety. But Catherine would not go. She had sade up her mind to stay with Peter at the head of the army, and was so obstinate about it that at last Peter gave her leave to remain. Then the wives of the generals, and finally of the lower officers, wanted to stay also. She persuaded Peter to let them do so, and the end was that the women all staid with the army.

Everything went against Peter on this march. The weather was very dry. Swarms of locusts were in the country, eating everything green. There was no food for the horses, and many of them starved to death. It was hard for the Russians to go forward or to go backward, his successor on the throne. and harder still to stay where they were.

At last the soldiers in front reported that the Turks were coming, and Peter soon saw a great army of 200,000 fierce Moslems in front of his little force, which counted up only 38,000 men. Seeing the odds against him, he gave the order to retreat, and the army began its backward march. As it neared the river Pruth a new danger showed itself. The advance guard brought word that a great force of savage Crim Tartars held the other bank of the river, completely cuttiing off Peter's retreat.

The state of things seemed hopeless. With 200,000 Turks on one side, and a strong force of Crim Tartars holding a river on the other, Peter's little army was completely hemmed in. There was no water in the camp, and when the soldiers went to the river for it, the Tartars on the other shore kept up a fierce fight with them. A great horde of Tur-kish cavalry tried hard to cut off the supply entirely by pushing themselves between Peter's camp and the river, but the Russians managed to repulse them by hard fighting, and to keep a road open to the river.

Peter knew now that upless help hould come to him in some shape, and that very quickly, he must lose not only his army, but his empire also, for if the Turks could take him prisoner, it was certain that his many enemies would soon conquer Russia, and divide the country among themselves. He saw no chance of help coming, but he made up his mind to fight as long as he could. He formed his men in a hollow square, was once visiting one of his officers, and with the women in the middle, and

The Turks flung themselves in great masses upon his lines, trying to crush the little force of Russians by mere prisoner, named Martha, and she was numbers. But Peter's brave men remembered that Catherine was inside their square, and they stood firmly at their posts, driving back the Turks with frightful slaughter. Again and again and again they fell upon his lines in heavy masses, and again and again and again they were driven back, leaving the field black with their dead. This could not go on forever, of course, and both sides saw what the end must be. As the Turks had many times more men than Peter, it was plain that they would win by destroying all the Russians.

For three days and nights the terrible slaughter went on. Peter's men beat back the Turks at every charge, but every hour their line grew thinner. At the end of the third 16,000 of their brave comrades lay dead upon the field, and only 22,000 remained to face the enemy.

Toward night on the third day, a terrible rumor spread through their camp. A whisper ran along the line that the ammunition was given out. A few more shots from each soldier's gun, with. Then Peter fell into the the sulks. As long as he could fight he had kept up his spirits, but now that all was lost, and his great career seemed near to its end, he grew angry and went to his tent to orders that nobody should come near him, and there was no officer or soldier

order and his anger, she boldy went into his tent, and asked him to give her leave to put an end to the war by making a treaty of peace with the Turks if she could. It seemed absurd to talk of such a thing, or to expect the Turks to make peace on any such terms when they had so good a chance to conquer Peter, once for all, and to make him their prisoner. Nobody but Catherine, perhaps, would have thought of such a thing, but Cathcrine was a woman born for great affairs, and she had no thought of giving up any chance there might be to save Peter

then set to work at the greatest task of dealing with the Turks.

She knew that the Turkish army was under the command of the Grand Vizier and she knew something of the ways of Grand Viziers. It was not worth while to send any kind of messenger to a Turalso a bribe in the shape of a present, and Catherine was sure that the bribe had won the friendship of everybody about her by her good temper and her pleasant ways, Peter public announced his marriage and declared Catherine to be his wife and Czarina. But still he did not crown her.

This was in the year 1711, and imwas not discouraged by that fact. She plate. She gave each of them a receipt should get back to Moscow. She went got together all the money, all the jewels, and all the silver plate that were to be found in the army. No one person had much, of course; but when the things were collected, they made a very rich present, or bribe, for the Grand Viz-

With this for a beginning, Catherine soon convinced the Grand Vizier that it was better to make peace with Russia than to run the risk of having to fight the great armies already marching to-ward Turkey. After some bargaining, she secured a treaty which allowed Peter to go back to Russia in safety, and thus she saved the Czar and the empire. A few years later, Peter crowned her as Empress of Russia, and when he died he named her as the fittest person to be

Thus the peasant girl of Livonia, who was made a captive in war, and a servant, rose by her genius and courage to be the sole ruler of a great empire—the first woman who ever reigned over Russia. It is a strange but true story.—Harper's Young People.

The Old Gentleman's Mistake.

"Nice child, very nice child," observed an old gentleman, crossing the aisle and addressing the mother of the boy who had just hit him in the eye with a wad of paper. "How old are you, my son?" "None of your business!" replied the youngster, taking aim at another passenger. "Fine boy," smiled the old man, as the parent regarded her offspring with pride. "A remarkable fine boy. What is your name, my son?" "Puddin Tame!" shouted the youngster, with a you had given me three guesses at it, that would have been the first one I would have struck on. Now, Puddin', you can blow those things pretty straight, can't you?" "You bet!" squealed the boy, delighted at the compliment. "See me take that old fellow over there!" "No, no!" exclaimed the old gentleman, hastily. "Try it on the old woman I was sitting with. She has boys of her own, and she won't mind." "Can't you hit the lady for the gentleman, Johnny?" asked the fond parent. Johnny drew a bead and landed a pellet right on the end of the old nose. But she did mind it, and rising in her wrath soared down on the small boy like a blizzard. She put him over the line, reversed him, ran him backward till he didn't know which end or him was front, and finally dropped him into the scared mother's lap with a benediction whereof the purport was that she would be back in a moment and sink him alive. "She didn't seem to like it, did she, Puddin'?" smiled the old gentleman, softly. "She's a perfect stranger to me, but I understand she is the matron of a truants' home, and I thought she would like a little fun; but I was mistaken." And the old gentleman sighed sweetly as he went back to his seat.

#### Melting out Beeswax.

I will not say who of our family can make the most muss while melting out wax, but even the worst one cannot make much muss my way of melting; but by the boiling out process there is too much chance for it. I have tried and there would be nothing left to fight both ways, and know of what I say. I take the pieces of comb, press them together in as small a compass as possible without too much trouble; then put it into the large dipper that fills the oven, or have one of his savage fits. He gave in two small ones if preferred. Make up a good fire and put the pans in the oven In a very short time it will be melted. in all the army who would have dared enter the tent where he lay in his dangerous mood.

But if Peter had given up in despair, Catherine had not. In spite of Peter's order and his anger, she boldy went into his tent and a held in the latter and a wax will have dropped by this time, and empty the refuse into the stove to make fire for melting out more wax. The wax in that way is pure and clean, and much whiter than when boiled, because the water takes out the dirt and coloring matter in the comb and mixes it with the wax; and I can do it much faster and with much less wood, which is quite an item in some places. Try it and see if it is not the best way.

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