

RUSSIA'S "LITTLE PARADISE"



Russian Recruits in Crimea.

(Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

WHILE the thermometer was 40 degrees below zero in Moscow recently, almond trees were flowering in the Crimea on the Russian shore of the Black sea. This contrast emphasizes Russia's vastness as well as it brings to notice a delightful spot of the huge country little known in its details to Americans. Yet at the same time, it is a land with certain aspects known to every school child. It is the land of the Cimmerians about whom Homer sang in the "Odyssey" and from whom the peninsula takes its name; the land of the Crimean war, the siege of Sevastopol, and the "The Charge of the Light Brigade"; the land in which Florence Nightingale first caused efficient, ordered mercy to have a part in war.

The Crimea is known as "The Little Paradise" to the Tatars, last of the many races to overrun the peninsula before the land fell under the sway of the Muscovite. A traveler journeying from the north is likely to accept this appellation, if at all, with a strong mental reservation as he crosses the almost desert-like plains of northern Crimea; but once over the mountains that rim the southern shore he will approve the description with enthusiasm. There nature has made a wonderful garden spot, the Riviera of Russia, a combination of sea, mountains and riotous verdure that really vied with its famed Italian counterpart in the days when czarhood was in flower.

Though a part of what has come to be looked upon on the whole as "cold Russia," the southern shore of the Crimea brought to the old empire a touch of the tropics. On the mountain slopes and in the sheltered valleys grow grapes, figs, olives and all the tender fruits; magnolias, bays, and myrtles; and a profusion of wild flowers and grasses. That the delights of its mild climate were discovered early is testified by the ruins of Greek, Byzantine, and Italian architecture which are to be found among the mosques of the later Tatars, the palaces of the Russian Imperial family and nobility, and the magnificent modern hotels of the pleasure towns to which the prosperous classes of Russia flocked before the World war. Yalta, in those care-free days, was Russia's Nice, Newport and Miami rolled into one.

Many Fascinating Features.

With a climate that borrows good features from Florida and southern California and had ones from many places, the Crimea is one of the most fascinating bits of territory between Portugal and Cochín, China. Its populace a congress of races, its industries ranging from the growing of subtropical fruits and the housing of Russia's elite as they fled from the cold, to the herding of sheep and the growing of grain, it was a place of many sided activities.

As the men of wealth of America have their winter homes in Florida and those of western Europe have theirs along the Riviera, the people of position in Russia had their country seats in the Crimea. And beautiful places they were, for in Russia the rich were very rich.

The peninsula is occupied by approximately 600,000 people, mostly Tatars, with a scattering of Russians, Greeks, Germans and Jews. Cleanliness and morality are said to be proverbial traits of the Crimean Tatars, who have been undergoing the influences of russification for several generations. They have taken up vine culture, fruit growing, and kindred occupations with a zeal seldom equalled east of the Aegean.

The Crimea is a peninsula that barely escaped being an island. It hangs from the mainland of South Russia down into the Black sea, like a gigantic watch fob shaped like a flounder. It is attached by the narrow ribbon of the Isthmus of Perekop, a strip of land only three-quarters of a mile wide and

only a few feet above sea level. On one side is the Black sea and on the other the stagnant, shallow, melodorous waters of the Sivatch, or Putrid sea, a lagoon of the Sea of Azov. This is the only broken natural land connection between the mainland and the Crimea, but a few miles to the east a narrow part of the Putrid sea has been bridged by the railroad which enters the peninsula.

Still farther eastward a peculiar natural formation, a mere threadlike causeway of sand known as the Tongue of Arabat, stretches for more than fifty miles from the mainland to the base of the "flounder's tail" that forms the easternmost extension of the Crimea. A canal has been cut through this spit of sand near its northern end to connect the waters of the Sea of Azov and those of the Putrid sea. The intrenching or mining of these three narrow land entrances to the Crimea would be a relatively simple matter from the point of view of military engineering.

The greatest width of the Crimea north and south is 115 miles, and its greatest length from "head" to "tail" is 225 miles. It contains about 9,700 square miles, and is thus approximately the size of the state of Vermont or the island of Sicily.

The Crimea was conquered by Catharine the Great of Russia in 1771 and remained a part of the Russian empire until that political entity's collapse in 1917. The bulk of the population remains Tatar, though there is an admixture of both Greek and Italian blood in the nominally Tatar people.

In the Crimean war fought by England, France and Turkey against Russia the final test of strength came at Sevastopol, on the west coast of the Crimea. Here the factors of unlimited resources operated in the allies' favor. Through their command of the sea they could secure everything needed, while the Russians could bring up their supplies only across the barren steppes, whose highways were marked at every step by the dead and the dying, both man and beast.

Sevastopol and Its Palaces.

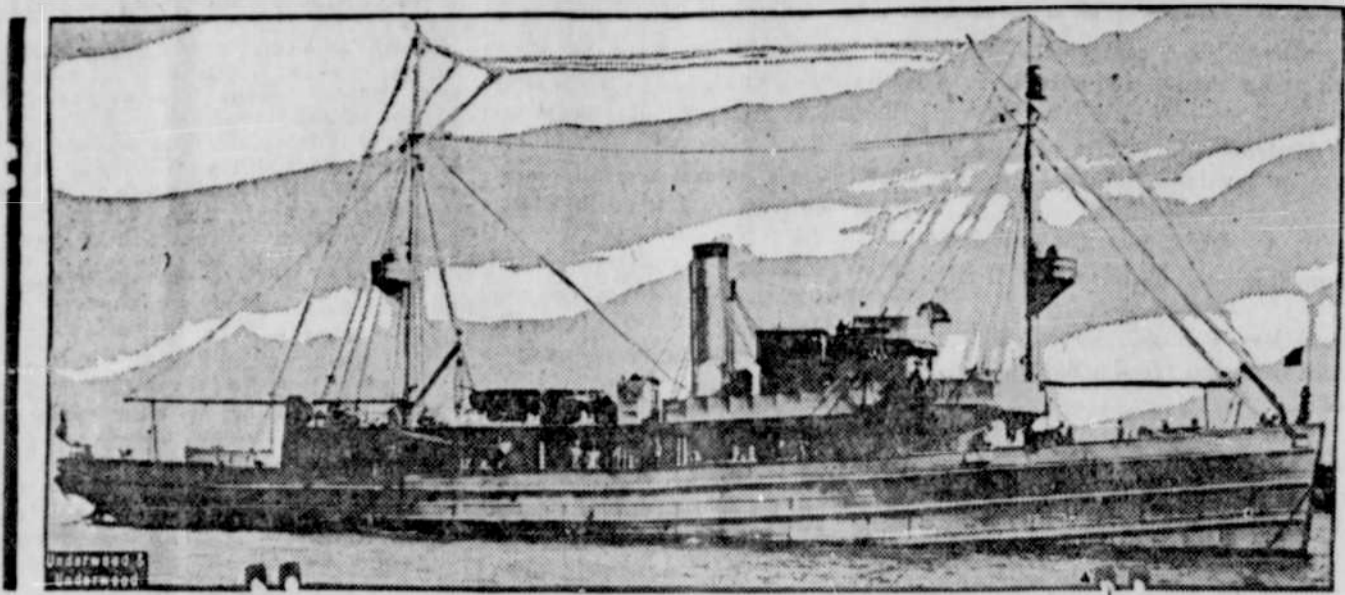
It is estimated that 50,000 British soldiers lie buried in the cemetery outside of Sevastopol. Before the World war this vast City of the Dead was watched over by a German who could speak no English, but who was proud of his privilege of guarding the ashes of those who fell at Balaklava and Inkerman.

Sevastopol remained until 1917 a great military post for the old Russian regime, and it was as well the home port of the Russian Black sea fleet. From there, according to cherished imperial dreams, was to go forth, on the Russian counterpart of "Der Tag," the forces that would wrest the Bosphorus and Dardanelles from the Turk, and place the cross of St. George over Constantinople and the Cross of Christ over Sancto Sophia.

The Imperial Large palace, to which it was once decided to send the late czar, is situated at Livadia, surrounded by a magnificent park. It is of recent construction, and was completed only about fifteen years ago. Hard by is the simply constructed Small palace, in an upper room of which Alexander III died. In no other country in the world was the reigning ruler possessed of so many lands or such extensive properties as was the case in Russia.

Southern Crimea is a garden land. Its fruits were famous in the northern Russian markets, and from its grapes a full-bodied, spicy wine was made. Vineyards covered more than 19,000 acres of the Crimea, and from them about 3,500,000 gallons of fine-quality wine was made each year. The waters around the peninsula abound in delicate fish, such as red and gray mullet, herring, mackerel, turbot, soles, plaice, whiting, bream, haddock, pilchard, a species of pike, whitebait, eels, salmon and sturgeon.

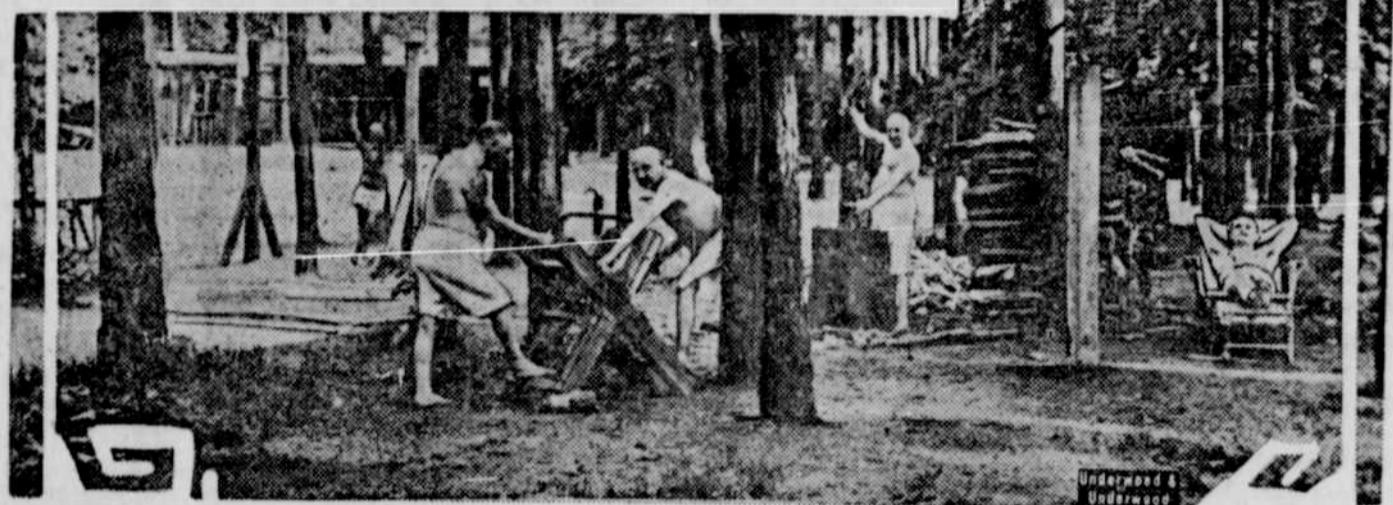
Oil Ship Recaptured by U. S. S. Pigeon



More than 100 armed Chinese soldiers, who had seized a Standard oil vessel on the Yangtse river, were forcibly removed when the ship was recaptured by the mine-sweeper Pigeon at Ichang. The photograph shows the Pigeon.

Germans Seek to Regain "That Boyish Figure"

A back to nature movement has been started by Germans with Falstaffian figures, who are endeavoring to regain that "boyish figure." The men, lightly clad, engage in various kinds of strenuous labor, with the hope of reducing the waistline. Their camp is situated at Weisser Hirsch, near Dresden.



THOMAS A. STONE



An especially posed portrait of Thomas A. Stone, secretary of the newly established Canadian legation in Washington.

SPANISH DICTATOR



The first posed photograph taken of Primo de Rivera, dictator of Spain.

The Right Spirit

The spirit of young America is shown by any small boy with a scooter. He knows he cannot hope to run over as many people as his elders can in their motor cars, but he isn't at all discouraged by that. He goes right ahead and does his best.

Splendid Rules for Life

Let not the emphases of hospitality lie in bed and board; but let truth and love and honor and courtesy flow in all thy deeds.—Emerson.

De Valera Visits Us Again



Photograph shows Mayor James J. Walker greeting Eamon de Valera, leader of the Irish Republican party, at the city hall in New York, when De Valera arrived here from Ireland.

Mussolini's Secretary Gets Job



Photograph shows the Marquis Pauluce de Calboli, personal secretary to Premier Mussolini, who has been made under secretary general of the Society of Nations.

WORTH REMEMBERING

Mice are the most popular baby food for young horned owls.

Electric motors in the United States do as much work in a day as 170,000,000 men.

Sacred bulls in Egypt were mummified and buried with great ceremonies after death.

The world's largest airplane, the Barling bomber, has six Liberty engines which develop 2,440 horse power.

Some kinds of goldenrod make desirable garden flowers.

California is represented in the General Federation of Women's Clubs by 333 clubs.

The Chinese are said to stand change of climate better than any other race.

Airplane freight companies of Europe are planning to issue international bills of lading.