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(SUGGESTED HEADINGS FOR THE FOLLOWING AUTOBIOGRAPHY)

" IMPRESSIONS OF A GLOBETROTTER "

" A POTPOURRI OF CONCORDS AND DISCORDS ON A VARIAGATED THEME "

by

"AN ENGLISHWOMAN".

## Record I

Russia or Rome - which was it to be? The love of travel and of novelty, the charm Russian art and Russian psychology had always had for me decided the question. So I left my beloved Italy fully assured I should some day return and set out on my venture just a year before the Great War broke out. I little dreamt what it would entail.

My destination was Czarskoe-Selo - the "Imperial Village". It was the winter resort of the late Emperor and his family and only half an hour's ride by train from StPetersburg. Princess G., a family friend, had invited me to stay with her there. - "Now is my chance", I thought, "let's take it!" To have friends to go to at such a distance was a piece of luck too good to let slip by. So there I was starting off on my eventful enterprise from a little country station in Tuscany, Italy, August, 1913.

And a long pull it was, broken only by the excitement of crossing the Russian frontier into what was then Russian Poland, and changing our train for a Russian one. Pandemonium generally reigns at these frontier stations, what with the babel of outlandish tongues, examination of passports, luggage ransacked for bombs or subversive literature, plus payment for locks broken for you in the process. When assured you were no nihilist, you were allowed to cross the boundary mark and enter "Holy Russia".

At last we reached the Polish capital - Warsaw. Such an interesting city full of old historical memories and modern bustling activity! Even the river - the Vistula - races along at full speed, as well as the carriages and horses driven by some of the finest drivers in the world (motor-cars being little in vogue then.) The art of driving is much cultivated in those regions, especially as the roads are very bad and often do not exist at all, except in the driver's imagination.

The Poles being a vanquished nation naturally had little love for the Russian Government. But they hated the Prussians still more (and no wonder.) Their language, though very similar to the Russian (minus the adoption of the Latin alphabet for that of St. Cyril) sounded far less soft and musical. Though few Poles spoke or understood Russian, (still less read it), the names of the streets and public notices were written in that tongue, with sometimes the Polish translation added. Surely only a universal war like the Great War could have liberated Poland from her three powerful conquerors? She was one of the countries that suffered most during that awful

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tragedy. But, at least, she won her complete liberty by it.

I now thought it would not be proper to enter the capital of "All The Russias" without being armed with a fur coat. So I bought one and fondly hoped it would last forever. Proudly wearing it I made my entry two days later into St. Petersburg, (still called so before the War.) The name was changed to Petrograd ("grad" being the old Russian word for "gorod" - town, only during the War. - "Now all my woes are to begin", I mused (for I did not know a word of Russian.) - "No, no!" For there was my guardian angel in the form of my friend, princess G., at the farther end of the lengthy platform waiting to welcome me under her protective wing. We were soon spinning away in her motorcar to Czarskoe-Selo. So I saw little of St. Petersburg that day.

The "Imperial Village" consisted mostly of villas, shady avenues, numerous barracks of the imperial regiments, a beautiful park, (gorgeous in its autumnal tints when I arrived), and the famous Ekaterinsky Dvorietz (the palace built by Catherine the Great), as well as the much less pretentious palace inhabited by the Imperial Family ever since the murder of Czar Alexander II at the Winter Palace in St. Petersburg.

Life at Czarskoe-Selo was very quiet, rendered still quieter for us by the progressive illness of poor prince G. Those who wished for gaiety and entertainment had to seek it in St. Petersburg, where most of the military betook themselves daily, or rather nightly. One soon discovered that distance and time do not exist for the Russian, probably due to the immensity of their country. Whether it was midday or midnight, one hour or six hours to wait - no matter, "nitchevo" - that truly all-comprising, all expressive word an outsider soon learns, often at his own expense.

Our villa was built of wood, as most private houses <sup>were</sup> ~~are~~ in Russia. Big stoves (fashioned in the same ugly way as in Germany) in every room and never let out, plus double windows puttied up for the winter, kept the whole house very warm and comfortable. Only a slice cut in both windowpanes is made to open and shut and acts as ventilator. The very fact of being thus hermetically sealed in by all that putty was oppressive. But one soon found that the winter air out there was so keen and piercing it penetrated even a double window if not puttied.

A wealthy Russian household generally consists of a regiment of servants and a separate governess or tutor for every foreign language taught the child.

ren. Being splendid linguists, they only believe in teachers teaching their own tongue and no other, especially for the sake of the accent. Consequently I represented the English tongue; a young Russian student the Russian; and a little French Swiss person kept the French "pot" boiling. (Later on she was entrusted with keeping the kettle boiling for tea rather than the French pot <sup>(pourri</sup>

As for meals, they were movable and constantly recurring feasts. The home "samovar" (self-boiler) appeared on the breakfast table at the entire disposal of late-comers any hour of the morning - a most ideal arrangement, to be sure. No family in Russia is too poor to possess one. It is part of their existence. On the wealthy table it appears richly carved in handsome metal work. The tea is drunk very weak - a teaspoonful for a dozen people and the pot refilled "ad infinitum" from the boiling samovar. That same dear samovar used to usher the day in and also usher it out. About 9 o'clock every evening, behold it reappear (just as one thought it had retired for the night) and welcome back the whole family and any friends to another cosy chat late into the nocturnal hours.

Another typical item, besides the samovar, was the wearing of uniforms. You were nobody without one. The men-servants serving at table had their liveries - (a most becoming one if he happened to be a Cossack). The students had theirs, (according to the subjects they were studying), and the school children according to the schools they frequented. The so-called "gymnasistka" always wore a brown dress and a black apron - as practical as it was unbecoming. She wore it in school, drawing-room, or theatre - everywhere and anywhere. Our student was studying architecture. So he was equipped with an "architectural" uniform.

Yet another personage must be mentioned before concluding this sketch of the motley household - the Italian nurse of the princess's youngest son. This good soul had been induced to come with the family all the way from Rome. Having had little schooling in her youth, she had not the faintest idea where she had got to. So when the War broke out she could not understand why it was impossible for her to walk across the frontier back to her beloved "Italia".

Another thing which puzzled her was the value of the Russian "rouble". - "Mi dica, signorina, quanto vale questo benedetto rouble?" (Tell me, Miss, what is the value of this blessed rouble?) - a question an expert could hardly answer, seeing how its value fluctuated from one moment to the other during those troublous times.

those troublous times.

Still another enigma for this simple soul was why the other Russian servants did not understand her when she spoke to them in Italian. - "For the same reason you do not understand them when they speak to you in Russian", I explained. She was not altogether convinced. For when the little Polish maid learnt that "yes" was "si" in Italian, she came out with it in season and out of season - whenever the Italian nurse tackled her with conversation, in fact. - "Vedi, come mi capisce bene!" (See how well she understands me!), exclaimed the good soul triumphantly. She was as plucky as she was honest. Suffering from toothache one day (and not believing in dentists) she tied a piece of string to the guilty tooth and begged each member of the household to give it <sup>u</sup> a tug. Only the Polish maid equalled her in valour and performed the operation.

The student also used to experience the vigour of her energetic temperament. When her charges became too unruly for her management, she would pant up like an overcharged steam-engine to his room on the top floor, burst into a tirade in Italian on their mischievous pranks, and summon his immediate presence downstairs to pass judgment on them. - "Weiser Fuchs! Ich werde ganz nervös!" (White fox! I'm getting quite nervous!), he exclaimed in German (not knowing Italian), pacing up and down his room, whilst the steam was being let off. It was as good as a show.

Years after, I met this strong-minded <sup>female</sup> creature in Rome again. She related all her adventures when escaping out of Russia with the princess's family. How she finally landed in an Italian hospital at Constantinople, where she felt so happy and contented after all her hardships she did not want to leave. How the Italian Consul got her out and bundled her back to her beloved "patri" (fatherland). She swore she would never leave it again. Neither did she, except to pass into the next world.

Russian

~~(The next instalment will contain a description of my first winter and the arrival of the Imperial Family.)~~

(FOOTNOTE on page 1. If desired the following can be inserted here:-

~~Russian railway lines are constructed on a wider gauge than in Europe expressly as a deterrent to the enemy in war time. Consequently, the carriages are much broader and much more comfortable than on many continental lines. Because of the greater distances and the slower speed travelling used to be very pleasant. (Nowadays it is a perfect nightmare!) Only four were allowed in a~~

The first year at Czarskoe-Selo was very quiet and uneventful. Autumn quickly glided into winter and the cold started in September with a steady crescendo throughout the following six months. Much of my time was spent tackling Russian grammar - a mighty tough job and one to be proud of if mastered. For Russian is known ~~is known~~ to be one of the most difficult of European languages. Innumerable endings make up for the lack of either definite or indefinite article. As for the pronunciation of certain letters, there is one, for instance, which requires a hearty sneeze to be produced properly, and another - well, that savours of <sup>sea-sickness.</sup> (boardship and all its woes.) On the other hand, even good linguists like Russians despair over the inconsistency of the pronunciation and spelling in English. - "Why do you write Liverpool and then pronounce it Manchester?", once exclaimed a puzzled student.

Another pastime consisted of giving private lessons in English to a few of the officers of the Imperial Regiments. Russians (as I have just said), are known to be among the best linguists, probably because their own tongue being so difficult every other seems easy in comparison. But these two or three pupils were by no means brilliant specimens. One, for instance, only took lessons when he was confined to the barracks for some trivial offence as a good means of killing time in a sociable way. The second found the ballet at St. Petersburg more entertaining than English verbs. The third trotted off to Cairo on a trip after mastering three sentences in nine lessons, namely, "How do you do", "Where is the ticket office?", and "I feel seasick" (this latter phrase in view of his prospective sea voyage, I presume.) He was the most jovial of the lot - so jovial, that when we heard of his death later on in the War, the princess quaintly remarked - "I cannot believe he could do anything so serious as to die."

Besides these three erratic pupils, I occasionally went up to St. Petersburg to teach English to a Russian girl. She was as pleasant as she was plump. Talk about plumpness! Why, you never saw such dimensions as in Russia! Too much fattening food and too little exercise accounted mostly for this. Many of these comfortably-off Russian ladies used to turn day into night and vice versa. The majority of them were visible only at 3 or 4 p.m. (when the sun had set in winter), and went to bed at 5 or 6 a.m. Thus they never saw the sun during the winter months and lived by artificial light only. (I fear their life must be the opposite extreme now - one of hardship and suffering, supposing they HAVE survived the Bolshevist Régime.)

A retired Colonel who came up from St. Petersburg every day to tutor the princess's eldest son, procured me the above-mentioned pleasant, plump friend. He also was a very Russian type - sociable, kindhearted, and fatalistic. Because of domestic unhappiness, he lived separated from his family with a young prince W. whom he also tutored. The latter (still in his "teens") had had the misfortune of an abnormal bringing-up. One day, when the Colonel returned to his quarters he found this youth hanging from the chandelier in his sitting-room. On being released and restored to consciousness, all he remarked was - "I am hungry and ready for a beefsteak." The Colonel related all this to us and the shock it gave him.

A short time afterwards, the princess got a phone-message from this same youth announcing that the Colonel - this time - had hanged himself in the ~~ver~~ very bedroom they both slept in and would we come to the funeral? Strange psychology of the Slav mentality! I began to wonder into what sort of a world I had tumbled?

Toward Christmas time the late Czar and his family arrived to spend the winter, as usual, in their residence at Czarskoe-Selo. The exact day and hour of their arrival was kept a dead secret. But one already suspected it. Had not cartloads of luggage been transported from the little imperial station (built expressly for the Imperial Family only) to the palace nearby? And had not the Imperial Cossacks been extra alert of late? When a certain number of them were seen patrolling day and night the spacious grounds surrounding the palace, one knew the arrival had taken place—an event I just missed, of course. Meeting these rough-riders in snowstorms was truly exhilarating, especially when they rode singing their wild songs intermingled with just as wild whistling (all of which can now be heard on records.) It was all so very very Russian.

Another very, very Russian sight was the characteristic "troika" (sledge with three horses) of the Grand Dukes and of the wealthy. Here is a little picture of one:- The three slim, graceful horses—often of a beautiful, pure, jet-black breed called Orloff, with flowing tails and manes—are generally harnessed abreast to the sledge. The middle one draws it in the usual straight fashion, and the one on each side always at full gallop with his neck curved outwards. This gives the whole turn-out a fanlike effect. The harness fittings are of pretty artistic metal-work, and the coachmen enveloped in voluminous fur coats and quaint caps put the finishing touch to this most characteristic of Russian equipages. The more inflated they are with cushions and pads, the more these coachmen admire themselves. One even saw clocks strapped to their

backs - presumably for the benefit of the occupants behind. Surely it was handier to have time dangling before your eyes than to dive down through layers of furs and rugs for your watch! All this extra baggage, however, did not hinder their truly artistic skill in driving.

The ordinary little sleigh has none of this pretty paraphernalia. It simply consists of a toylike sledge, with plenty of room for one and just not enough for two. (As for the coachman - well, he sits on the very edge of his imagination.) The sledge and the shafts are all of one piece, so that at every turn or twist the sledge and you go one way, and the horse another. But woe betide if you do not hold on for dear life when going at full speed! There was absolutely nothing to keep you from flying out when a jerk or bump comes along, or when the swing of the full momentum overpowers you at the above-mentioned twists and turns. Only, perhaps, the protective arm of the cavalier sitting beside you - a custom in vogue among the chivalrous-minded Russians.

Thank goodness the Russian is too artistic to patronise motorcars rather than his picturesque sleigh - (at least, so it was under the Imperial Régime.)

The cold was intense. One never went out without being adorned with a halo of hoarfrost, or without having to rub one's eyelashes to keep them from freezing the eyelids together. Trotting out in snowstorms and having one's face thoroughly massaged with the tingling flakes till it looked like a glowing sunset or sunrise (according to the time of the day) was delightful. The halo and sunset glow, however, all melted into a trickle as soon as one crossed the warm threshold of the house.

An occasional glimpse of the little Czarevitch flying past in his troika, or tobogganing in the palace grounds, accompanied by his sailor companion, was all we saw of the Imperial Family that year. When the War broke out, we sometimes came in close contact with the Grand Duchesses; for they took an active part in the social works.

About midwinter poor prince G. Passed away. He was a true Russian aristocrat, both in character and in appearance. His gentle, unassuming, courteous manner towards everyone, as well as his personal charm, endeared him to all. It was the first time I had ever witnessed a Russian funeral-customs and rite. They certainly differed from ours and might have seemed strange to some of us. But the religious rites were very impressive.

The body is laid out on a catafalque usually erected in the middle of the reception room, the walls of which are covered with black and silver hanging

Around the catafalque are big candles on pedestals, and these burn day and night. Instead of the absolute stillness <sup>to which</sup> we are accustomed ~~to~~ pervading the house, and the seclusion of those bereaved, the Russian custom is to have a Requiem Service chanted by priests morning and evening beside the catafalque ~~and to which~~ all the relatives and friends are invited. As distances are great, most of them stay for the following repast. Some even spend the three days and nights of solemn celebrations on the premises. All this naturally incurs a certain amount of inevitable movement and noise.

Besides the prayers of the priests, two nuns from an Orthodox convent are also engaged to recite prayers unceasingly day and night till the body is transferred to the cemetery. They achieve this by taking alternate turns at so many hours of prayer and so many of repose. The singing of the Russian Requiem Chants, when the choir is good, is very soul stirring. The day of the funeral the celebration lasted, in this case, from 7 o'clock in the morning till about 3 or 4 p.m. First, there was the fairly long walk to the station; for the prince was to be buried in St. Petersburg. Shrines with tapers burning before the ikons were to be seen in the stations in Russia at that time (certainly not now under the new godless régime!) Every time the coffin was re-  
moved, prayers were offered up; also before the shrine on the railway plat-  
<sup>form.</sup>

Then came an interminable walk up the fine Nievsky Prospekt, far away to the cemetery of some famous monastery in the neighbourhood. The hearse and horses were all draped in white. The long file of carriages and motorcars that followed in the rear were empty; for the occupants were all supposed to walk except those who could not. When the procession had finally reached the monastery church, the Requiem Mass, lasting a couple of hours, commenced. This terminated with the mourners giving their kiss of peace and farewell to the departed soul. Then the coffin-lid was sealed down and the body was borne to the grave. Thus ended a sad, but memorable day - my first experience of a wealthy Russian funeral.

(Record III describes the Easter celebrations and first experience of Russian country life.)

## RECORD III

At last the glorious feast of Easter arrived - the greatest fete of the whole year in Russia. I was able to be present at all the beautiful church ceremonies of Holy Week and hear the choir of the Imperial Bodyguard of Cossacks sing. Russian sacred music, when executed by trained voices, is the most ideal on earth. No musical instrument is allowed in the Orthodox Church, and only the works of the best composers are accepted. So the quality is always sure to be good. Many, though, find the style <sup>somewhat</sup> rather monotonous.

On Easter night all Russia is awake; for the ceremony begins only about 11 o'clock at night. After the beautiful midnight Mass there is a family banquet of all the food blessed on the eve by the priest, including the famous Easter dish called "Pascha" - very sweet and rich in taste and pyramidal in form. The piles of motley-coloured hardboiled eggs also greatly add to the gay aspect of the repast. Everybody is clad in his or her brightest garments, pays visits heralded by the Easter greeting "Hristos voskres" (Christ is risen) and the so-called "kiss of peace", and the church bells ring for three days, free of access to all who wish to try their skill on them. Russian bells never chime. They simply clash. So it did not require much skill to imitate THAT jangle.

The Russian Lenten Fast - strictly observed only in the monasteries and by a few devout souls - ends with the Easter midnight Mass. During the preceding Holy Week the churches are crowded. Many - especially among the ~~weak~~ wealthy - only enter them at that sacred time and take away, as it were, a provision for the rest of the year.

Before Mass begins, there is a procession of the priests and the faithful, all bearing lighted tapers, around the church outside. This is done in remembrance of the Holy Women visiting the Sepulchre before dawn. Just before the hour of midnight, a priest with a magnificent, stentorian voice, and chosen expressly for the purpose, announces "Hristos voskres!" Then the bells of all the churches ring out in clashing vibrations, producing a most impressive effect in the dead silence of the night. The Mass lasts till 2 a.m., followed by the Easter banquet till about 5 or 6 in the morning. The successive two or three days are spent in bed, in feasting, in visiting, and in feeling as happy as possible with the whole world.

I loved those Russian Easters and was enchanted when I found I could enjoy two Easters and two Christmases every year out there. The fact of the Russian calendar being 13 days behind ours accounted for this privilege.

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Easter meant approaching spring, or spring itself, ushered in in good time with pickaxes, shovels, melting snow, and cartloads carrying it away. Summer very soon overtook her and found us all on the country property of the princess, not far from the town of Tula, (near "Yasnaja Poliana" - the country home of the famous Russian writer Tolstoi.) On the way there I caught a glimpse for the first time of the city I had always longed to see - Moscow. I little thought in what dramatic circumstances I was to see it again a couple of years later.

Now began my first experience of Russian country life. The scenery was quite pretty; just undulating fields and woods, dotted here and there by a distant hamlet or village. The house itself was nicely built. But preserve me from ever inhabiting any so-called "adjunct" of it again! This wing had been recently and badly added on, and was so damp <sup>that</sup> all the wallpaper was peeling off. My aching and stiffened bones, (after passing one sopping night in it) felt in the same condition as the wallpaper the next morning.

The garden was very attractive in its wildness. As for the birds, one never heard such a-to-do the livelong day. One big bird's wild bell-like note was quite striking. It was the "oriole" (of the eagle species) and evidently Russia was one of the few countries where it was heard.

Another <sup>creature</sup> animal which impressed one, <sup>but</sup> (only in a different way) was a ghastly little object supposed to be a dog. It suggested far more a sort of cross-breed between a bat and an overgrown rat. Its uncomeliness also suggested the appropriate name of "Stinky" - bestowed upon it by the Scotch tutor (who had then replaced the Russian student.) To console the little brute for this insult, the affable mademoiselle and the strong-minded Italian nurse used to pet it - the former calling it "mon cher petit Stinkee" (pronounced with the French nasal sound), and the latter "caro Stinkuccio" (pronounced Stinkootchio.) This ending "ootchio" affixed to any word in Italian implies endearment and charm <sup>and no doubt</sup> (most befittingly applied in this case) - thus saved the little beast from melancholia.

The mainstay of the property was the milk - sent off and sold daily in Moscow. Listening in the evening to the cowherds singing their tuneful folksongs (and sometimes dancing as well) to the accompaniment of an accordion was most enjoyable, especially if the whole scene was enhanced by a lovely sunset. These cowherds dexterously manipulated whips about a mile long for driving in the cows.

~~But the quaintest thing of all was the country coachman's uniform. It~~

But the quaintest thing of all was the country coachman's uniform. It consisted of a Russian blouse—always worn by the peasant's and by gentlefolk too—set off by a round cap adorned with bright coloured cockfeathers, stuck straight up all round, — porcupine-fashion. Seated behind this lively headgear, the princess and I took some pleasant drives together. One drive in particular remained indelibly engraved on my mind, (probably because it made such a physical impression upon my body at the time.)

We all decided to go for a jaunt to a neighbouring country town. Our jaunting-car was a "lineika" — the Russian word for "ruler". Never was a name more appropriately given; for never was anything invented harder or clumsier in the vehicle line. All solid, bare boards with two raised planks running lengthwise for seats, and not a single spring to relieve one's creaking, disjointed bones! We had to sit back to back, (as in an Irish jaunting-car) and cling on for dear life. For the roads — apart from the main roads — consisted of ruts, and the horses of one continuous gallop. — "Preserve me from another picnic if ever I survive!", I joltingly mused in between the alarming upheavals. Well, we DID survive, and limpingly betook ourselves to a convent in the town.

A sort of tenacious love of uniformity pervades everything Russian. For instance, there is only one religious Order — that of St. Basil — both for men and women; consequently, only one habit — all black. When they officiate in church they put on a tall cylinder-shaped covering on their head, terminating in a black veil — Greek-style. Russian women are not allowed to take their final vows till the age of 40, because they are not supposed to know their minds till then; Their services are long, and even the public have to stand throughout; for pews do not exist in the Russian churches. Only a few chairs are provided for the aged and the feeble. These churches are mostly white-washed and crowned with bright blue domes. This, with the red and green-roofed houses, gives a gay touch to the general outlook.

Our visit over, we strengthened ourselves with food, so as to outlive the ordeal home. We actually DID, and then one and all painfully took to our beds — and took a week to recover as well.

Another reminiscence was the sight of all the peasants, (who lived and worked on the princess's property) trooping up one sunny day to the house singing and dancing on their way. They came with baskets full of strawber-

ries picked on the property grounds and then offered as a "present" to the princess. This, I presume, acted as a pretext for obtaining the donation of money the master, or mistress, had to make to each of them. Strange customs of strange lands!

The all-pervading custom of unbounded hospitality, however, appealed to me strongly; especially when it took the form of inviting a friend of mine for any length of time she fancied. Her married sister was then living in this country (I relate my visit to her later on), and she had come to stay with her for awhile. To show how the conception of distance and time was as generous and unlimited as the instinct of hospitality in the Russians, this friend told me that not having found any seat vacant in the train on her way out, she had complained to the guard. - "You can stand in the corridor", he assured her. "It is only a 5 hour trip." And so she did.

Russian railway-lines are constructed on a wider gauge than in Europe expressly as a deterrent to the enemy in war time. Consequently, the carriages are broader and much <sup>more</sup> comfortable than on many continental lines. Because of the greater distances and the slower speed travelling was very pleasant. (What it is like now, heavens knows!) Only four were allowed in a Class II compartment. At night the seats were transformed into full length couches. Hot tea - the universal drink - was available at any hour of the day or night, and the service was good, especially when well tipped. The tea was always served in glasses with a slice of lemon - "à la russe".

A thunderbolt, however, came suddenly hurtling from out the blue, and put an end to our idyll of country life. that summer in 1914.

(This seismic upheaval has been duly registered in ~~the~~ Record IV.)

And now came the thunderbolt from out the blue, rudely crashing the serenity of that peaceful little country spot where we <sup>were</sup> spending the summer of 1914. The GREAT WAR had broken out. The youngsters of the family heralded in the terrific catastrophe by rushing to the piano and singing the Russian, French, and English anthems. All the men and horses on the property were mobilised. Our somewhat tragic pastime was to walk to the country station and watch the trains full of recruits pass. One pathetic scene of a poor peasant mother seeing her son off impressed us very much. Just as the train was starting, she burst out singing farewell words in a strange, melancholy air of a few notes in a minor key, each line, as it were, terminating in heartbroken sobs, until the train was out of sight. - "Obratno! Obratno!" (He'll return!), shouted the guard on the train, by way of consoling her. This sad parting dirge was evidently some ancient custom among the Russian country folk.

We also took to the train and returned to Czarskoe-Selo. Here we spent another quiet winter; but this time engrossed in the interests of the War. Not knowing Russian sufficiently I could not follow the lectures given for training those who wished to tend the wounded. But I visited them with little gifts and also went to the Ekaterinsky Palace with many others and sewed for the soldiers' families.

The Grand Duchesses had instituted a sewing-guild there and often joined us in the work. They were four simple, nice-looking girls. (Alas, their tragic end makes one so sad whenever recalled to mind.) When they entered the immense hall of the sewing-guild, everyone stood up and made their curtsey as they passed - according to the rules of etiquette. Having once committed the fatal error of sitting down to my sewing-machine without noticing that the Grand Duchess Olga was just opposite me, I tried to repair my inadvertence the next time by making my most respectful "reverence" before a group of court ladies among whom I thought the Grand Duchess was to be found. Alack, it was hailed by a burst of merriment; for none of the Royalty happened to be present.

The second attempt at reparation was the most fatal of all. Meeting the Grand Duchess Anastasia - the youngest daughter of the four <sup>sisters</sup> - one afternoon in the entrance hall, I made such a deep curtsey I miscalculated the distance of the wall behind me and struck my foot against it. This brought my

obeisance to an abrupt end - to the amusement of the little Princess. I never entered that palace again. *(omit this paragraph, if desirable, because of present circumstances)*

Those were sad Christmases and Easters during all those following years, especially for the Russians. Now the godless Soviet Regime is trying to eradicate these feasts - <sup>and indeed</sup> every vestige of religion altogether, in fact, and institute Antichrist instead and the god of MATERIALISM. }

Later on in <sup>the</sup> spring of 1915 frequent parades of the various regiments took place in the vast court of the Ekaterinsky Palace. All the Imperial Family, with the pretty young Czarevitch dressed in the uniform of the regiment on parade, was present. I remember at the last parade seeing him limping along by his father's side; for the poor little fellow suffered from a fatal disease called "hemophilia", which used to attack different parts of his body. This misfortune alone would have excluded him from ascending the throne had he <sup>lived</sup> lived.

It was about this time too that I caught a glimpse - at a distance - of the notorious Rasputin. This enigmatic personage was an illiterate Siberian peasant. (I saw his handwriting once - that of an infant's.) Through his cunning, intellect, and hypnotic power, he was accused of exercising a baneful influence at court, especially over the Empress. She was much given to mysticism and was convinced he exerted a supernatural sway over her son regarding his illness. She died still believing in his "sanctity".

So much has been written both on Rasputin and the Imperial Family, I will say nothing more myself. God alone knows the truth of the whole matter. Let it only be said that the Empress was one of the most misjudged of women, and that both she and the Emperor were <sup>as</sup> models husband and wife and devoted father and mother. Their love for each other, for their children, for their country and for their Faith was all that was most noble. Those who witnessed their daily life in exile in Siberia (especially during those last tragic months of mental and physical torments they were subjected to at Ekaterinburg) testify to the heroic Christian spirit and fortitude with which they all bore their sufferings and met their shameful death. Also the beautiful letters the Empress wrote during this time to her court ladies (which fortunately have been preserved. See Footnote.) are another proof of her indomitable Christian spirit. She was by nature shy and reserved outside her family circle, and was consequently quite misunderstood by the outer world.

FOOTNOTE. See "Memories of the Russian Court" by Anna Vyroubova (another very maligned woman.) Also - "Life and Tragedy of Alexandra Feodorovna, Empress of Russia", by Baroness Sophie Buxhoeveden (a court lady.)

The Czar, though the best intentioned of men, was said to be of a vacillating nature and easily influenced by those around him, who took good care he should never know the true state of affairs. His love for his country was so deep he willingly abdicated and wished to efface himself altogether, be it for the welfare of Russia. Neither he nor the Czaritza believed their own people would ever betray them, till the very moment of their murder. (How little does royalty know the truth, especially an autocrat like the Czar of All the Russias!)

When things came to a climax, Rasputin was killed by three prominent accomplices. (One of them - Prince Youssouppoff → I met years after in Rome.) Both this murder (which savoured of mediaeval times) and the mysterious, tragic end of this most unhappy Royal Family is well known. What may not be so well known is the following incident which greatly enhances the memory of those unfortunate Grand Duchesses:-

When Kerensky <sup>(then ruler of Russia)</sup> exiled the Czar and Czaritza to Siberia <sup>in 1917</sup>, he told these young girls they were free to leave the country, if they wished. But they nobly preferred to share their parents' fate, and were subsequently all brutally murdered together in exile - victims of their fidelity to the Allies.

Among the many books <sup>(for the anticipation of which I beg excuse)</sup> written on this tragic page of history three writers in particular might be recommended:- Mr. Robert Wilton ("The last days of the Romanoffs"); Mr. Nicolas Sokoloff ("The Assassination of the Russian Imperial Family"); and monsieur Pierre Gilliard ("Thirteen Years at the Russian Court"). The latter was tutor in the Imperial Family for many years. He was so devoted to them he exiled himself with them to Siberia and participated in their hardships and trials. All three writers took active part in the Commission sent to Ekaterinburg to enquire into the wholesale butchery of the Royal Family and several of their suite. The murder was organised by Sverdlov and his <sup>associates</sup> Communistic gang in Moscow. The actual murderer who carried out the instructions was a Jew called Yourowsky, <sup>aided by</sup> plus his assassins.

Germany, (represented by Count von Mirbach) sent the Commissioner Yakovlev to Tobolsk to order the Czar to go to Riga (most probably), and thereby win their friendship and restore the Russian monarchy (under condition of making a separate peace, of course.) Jacob Sverdlov - Jew and Chairman of the All-Russian-Central-Executive-Committee in Moscow - wrote out this order with one hand and with the other ordered the Ural Regional Soviet to get the Czar to Ekaterinburg to murder him and the whole family. Yakovlev's train tried

to get to Omsk; but at the Kulomzino station the train was surrounded by Red troops and taken to Ekaterinburg, (First only the Czar, the Czaritza, and <sup>were sent to there</sup> and the Grand Duchess Maria; later on the rest of the children joined them.) So their only consolation was to have been able to die ~~all~~ together.

After the slaughter in the merchant Ipatieff's house (where the family was imprisoned), the corpses were taken to a clearing in the forest (near the village Koptiaki) and burned; the ashes and charred remains being buried in the depths of a disused mineshaft. When Ekaterinburg was recovered by the White Army, the Commission of Enquiry, (with N. Sokoloff, Examining Magistrate, at the head) discovered hundreds of articles and fragments, as well as the charred remains of human bodies, in this mineshaft - all minutely examined and authenticated. These gruesome relics, <sup>with</sup> plus the evidence of the Enquiry, were taken to Harbin by monsieur Gilliard and N. Sokoloff, in 1920. They appealed to the British High Commission in Pekin to take the relics, etc, to Europe. But the British Government declined the responsibility. So they were entrusted to the French General Janin, and transmitted by him to their final destination.

Another interesting book is " The Real Romanoffs ", by Gleb Botkin, son of the Imperial physician, Dr. Botkin, <sup>who was</sup> ~~also~~ murdered during that tragic night.) It proves <sup>to be true</sup> the sensational rumour of the survival of the Grand Duchess Anastasia, (whom he knew), and of her reappearance in Germany and in New York, ~~to be true.~~

~~(Record V describes a summer spent on the Finnish Gulf and adventures with Cossacks.)~~

## RECORD V

In the month of May that same year, 1915, I left Czarskoe-Selo for good and went to spend that summer with a Russian family of three young girls at a pretty spot on the Finnish Gulf very near the Imperial summer residence of Peterhof. This place has been compared to Versailles. A good comparison, seeing both were built as summer pleasure resorts amidst beautiful gardens, fountains, lakes, kiosks, etc. (~~though~~ Nicholas II and his family did not much frequent it, ~~one says~~, preferring to sail the Finnish Gulf on the royal yacht "Standart".) That wooded strip of coast from Peterhof down to Oranienbaum, with the fortified island of Kronstadt just opposite, appeared attractive, especially by the light of a so-called "White Night". This phenomenon is one of the most poetic. It begins in May and lasts about six weeks. One might call the light opalescent, and it is so strong one can read by it throughout the night. The phenomenon increases the further north one goes.

That summer will remain indelibly impressed upon my mind with reminiscences both pleasant and unpleasant - mostly the latter. The reverberation of machine-guns practising all day long; the continual passing of regiments to the front; the nightly patrol of Mounted Cossacks; the lovely White Nights spent on the seashore; the reassuring "click-click" of the "Karaoul" (night watchman, who produced this sound with a small wooden instrument when on his rounds to ~~WARN~~ the burglars of his approach) - all this created a mixture of feelings difficult to define.

As for the Cossack-patrol-reminiscence, it will remain the most indelible of all. This is how it came about:-

The neighbouring Baltic Provinces - swarming with German-Russo spies - kept this Patrol constantly on the alert, especially at nighttime. I happened to be returning one evening with the three girls from seeing their father, a General, off from a nearby station. Hardly had we left the platform when we found ourselves in pitch darkness on the country road. By way of encouragement we linked arms, chatted gaily in French, and instinctively groped our way downhill towards the main road.

Suddenly we heard clattering hoofs in the distance approaching. - "The Cossack Patrol!", gasped the girls. UN-linking, we all four groped our way to what we hoped was the edge of the road, for fear of being trampled on. Up galloped the Cossacks and - of course - made for me. In a twinkle they

they whipped out their flashlights. And there was I trying to squeeze myself into thin air, (rather than be trampled into it) and not knowing in what tongue to prove my innocence.

If an uneducated Russian hears a language spoken he does not understand, he immediately brands you as a "nemetz". This word signifies both "dumb" and "German". When the Teutons first went to Russia they could not speak the language. Hence they were dubbed "nemetz" (dumb) by the commonfolk. And thus the double signification has remained to this day. (Sorry this digression has kept the Cossacks with their flashlights waiting so long.) You may be sure they did not wait for me to explain all this to them in French!

Evidently thinking none of us looked "spy-ey", or "nemetz" enough to be trampled on, they all clattered off into the inky darkness. We followed suit (taking care it was in the opposite direction) - linked up again, and sang patriotic songs to regain our mental equilibrium, instinct still guiding us. She happened to guide us right on to the main road, probably aided by the spasmodic flashlights whisked on us from crannies and nooks by watchful eyes, as we passed. These minor shocks, however, disturbed us less than the big one at the start. Once home, we vowed we would not try another jaunt during those spooky times.

The Cossack Regiments by day treated us in a very different way. They often halted just at the bottom of our lawn and entertained us with their picturesque, wild dancing to the accompaniment of an accordion; <sup>performer</sup> one even turning many somersaults in perfect rhythmic time to the music.

How true it is that material comfort and pretty surroundings are not sufficient to make one happy. The people one comes in daily contact with are the mainspring of happiness in this human timepiece of ours. If they are disagreeable, their disagreeableness seems to poison the very atmosphere and every living thing in it. Is not the senseless bringing-up, or "dragging-up" (as more appropriately <sup>termed</sup> expressed) of modern Youth the cause of this? The cultus of "Self" and "Individuality" is the microbe that creates most of the trouble. <sup>"self-expression"</sup>

This microbe was certainly rampant in the family I was staying with. The only person not infected by it was the nice, homely, Russian governess. The old granny was also immune, except for her inordinate sense of pride. Her three grand-daughters had eight cousins living next door - also all devotees of the above microbe. Thank goodness this formidable contingent of youth

conspired to devote its services to the culture of the microbe the livelong day, and thus left me to my own devices. (Sounds somewhat paradoxical after the above criticism! But who would not prefer the company of books, music, and pretty walks to the company of human beings devoured by <sup>self-importance?</sup> ~~the execrable~~ hydra?)

Here is an amusing incident which occurred between me and the youngest girl one day. She was the most attractive-looking, the most intelligent, and the most selfish and conceited (if any degree were possible among them) of the three. We were going sea-bathing in the shallow, tideless, and saltless saters of the Finnish Gulf. - "What are you going to do with that bathing-gown?", she asked, seeing me pack it up. - "Wear it, of course." - "Surely you are not going to do that? We will be so embarrassed!," she naively exclaimed. (This came from many Russians wearing their simple birthday costume when bathing.)

Soon, however, I found pleasant company in the more human form of a "telegraphist" in the nearby P.O. She was a pathetic case of a young married woman, separated from a worthless husband, and trying to keep herself and her two children alive by receiving and sending telegrams. She related to me the tragic episode of having had her brother - an aviator - shot down in his aeroplane by his own people. They had mistaken him for the enemy.

I used to enjoy running over in the evenings and exchanging English for Russian conversation with her. These conversations had to be carried on in snatches - in between the calls of the telegraph apparatus.

One evening, one of these calls, instead of annoying us with the interruption, very much entertained us. I was expecting a telegram from a family in Moscow with whom I was to spend the remainder of my stay in Russia. Sure enough, as the words came tapping out letter by letter, they spelt my answer. I was to go to Moscow the next day for an interview.

The prospect delighted me; but I had my misgivings how the old granny would take it. I had told her nothing about my plans as yet. When I DID tell her, her pride was so piqued at the thought of my arranging to go elsewhere when still in her house, she said I could go and - STAY there. Now I had only settled to spend the summer with her, and this project was for the coming autumn and winter. I was well in my rights. However,

there was no reasoning with this dear old soul on the brink of the grave. So I started packing up, wondering where on earth I and my trunks were going to? Luckily, the homely, nice Russian governess came to the rescue and answered that query. She reasoned the granny into a halfway compromise, namely, I could stay on 3 weeks more and then depart with her blessing. This, at least, gave me breathing space to discover the direction I and my trunks were going to take, whilst awaiting the fixed date for my entry into Moscow.

The hotels in Petrograd were overflowing. Everything was in a somewhat chaotic state, owing to the disheartening trend events were taking in the War. Providence, as usual, came to <sup>my</sup> the help. A friend, on hearing my plight, invited me to spend a few weeks with her at Petrograd during her children's absence.

So with a farewell of relief to the "Three Graces" and their cult of the Mighty Atom, and with an affectionate embrace from the dear old granny (who assured me she was not sending me away), I left with my pleasant and unpleasant reminiscences of that pretty spot well packed into my trunks.

~~(My three weeks interim in Petrograd and then - Moscow, will be heard on Record VI.)~~

## RECORD VI

Those three weeks interim in Petrograd enabled me to see a little more of that capital. It is built on islands, intersected with numerous canals, and tacked together with bridges. But the streets are so broad, the spaces so great, and the sea so invisible, the island theory seemed to partake of the same nature and become an illusion. These canals and the swiftly dancing "Neva" (the river), the Winter Palace with its vast court and statue of Peter the Great, the Hermitage and Alexander III Picture Galleries, the Marinsky Theatre, and the handsome old Isaisky Sabor (St. Isaac's Cathedral - now turned into an anti-God museum) are the objects I recollect best in that city. The river Neva supplied all Petrograd with water, whether for drinking or otherwise. It had a decided flavour - so much so <sup>that</sup> the Petrogradites declared they missed it when drinking tea made with other water. The flavour was an asset to the tea, they declared.

To walk along the Nievsky Prospekt (one of the finest and broadest streets in the world) in midwinter, and see the sleighs - especially of the rich - with their magnificent horses dashing past, inebriated, as it were, with the piercing iciness of the air, was one of the sights that fascinated one most. It WAS so Russian, and one likes things to be truly characteristic of the country one is in, and no imitations.

What was not characteristic was the execrable spirit of my friend's factotum maid. As this lady friend - a geologist by profession and capable of speaking 12 languages - was out all day occupied with her scientific work, I was left to the mercy of this revolutionist, who gave me a foretaste of what was to come. She could neither read nor write, but seemed to have wits about her. This is the sort of thing with which she used to entertain me:-

When I was partaking of my frugal repast of chocolate, biscuits, and tea, plus an occasional egg (food was already beginning to be less abundant), this virago would enter and treat me to an "hors-d'oeuvre" in the form of a ferocious tirade. Shaking her fist in my face, she exclaimed - "What is the difference between you and Me?" My Russian not being elastic enough to discuss social problems with ignorant termagants, I left her to answer her own query. She certainly did, and in a most forcible way; but whether with logic or not, only a mind like hers could say. The ordeal was most embarrassing for I hardly liked to complain to my hostess. She probably found out her maid's sweet disposition later on at her own expense, the dear kind soul,

when Bolshevism set it in full fashion.

Another incident of unpleasant recollection was with a lady acquaintance of my friend's. She was a typical Russian artist - both physically and morally. Of fine build and good looks, and endowed with all the Slav charm of manner, she was as thriftless as she was engaging. Being an opera singer and out of work, my kind friend invited her to come daily and practise her singing on her piano. I, on my part, invited her to share my above solitary egg, biscuits, and tea. (Her company, at least, kept the termagant and her alarming "entrées" at bay.) - "Je n'ai pas su arranger mes affaires dans la vie." (I have not known how to settle my affairs in life), she wistfully remarked to me.

But her thriftlessness went a little too far for once. She turned up one cold evening, elegantly but lightly dressed, and armed with only a sachet and powder-puff. She said she had been turned out of her abode for overdue rent, was trembling with fever, and was also ready to throw herself into the Neva. I invited her to some more egg, biscuits, and tea, before doing <sup>that.</sup> ~~that~~ Thus fortified, she spent the rest of that night trembling with fever (according to her), and looking out of the window for the homecoming of my friend. The latter, unfortunately, returned only the next morning from the country. A somewhat lively altercation then ensued, to judge by my friend's exclamations of reproof I overheard. - "Have you not exposed me to the re-  
criminations of the police by passing the night in my house without their sanction and without your passport?" (so strict were these regulations at that time.)

The reproof went home. For this artist of the fine voice, the powder-puff, and the desire to plunge into the Neva, with dignity refused my last invitation to share my egg and biscuits, and disappeared for good - but not into the Neva, I was assured. (~~A regrettable finale, alack!~~)

This geological friend related how once she was able to put her twelve languages to good account. Some time before the War there was a conference of all the geologists throughout the world held in St. Petersburg. During the ensuing banquet, she was asked to address them. This she did to twelve different national representatives in their own tongue - to their genuine surprise and appreciation.

Alas! What has become of all my kind Russian friends who remained to be victims of the interminable tragedy of their country?

It was now time for my departure for Moscow - my last halting-place and the most sensational one before my final flight out of the country. My friend saw me off at the station, thank goodness, seeing the confusion and babel which existed there and my inability to make myself understood, however remotely, in that most interesting, fascinating, and outrageously difficult language. However, I was not to live in Moscow just then, but at a country resort called Czaritzino, half an hour further on by train.

It was late summer, and the family I was to live with was still enjoying their season's vacation. The place seemed to be to Moscow what Peterhof was to Petrograd - all villas, parks, small lakes, and - in this case - the ruins of the ancient Imperial Palace. In the palace gardens lies an artificial lake inhabited by fishes adorned with microscopic earrings - a whimsical legacy bequeathed to them by Catherine the Great, so the story goes. But there is a scientific reason for this seeming caprice. It was taken as a means to calculate the number of years a fish could live. There also stands a little summer kiosk nicknamed "Capriz" - so called, because Catherine had had it erected in one night (so one relates.)

My new family consisted of two girls and a boy. Never was there a more fascinating child than that six-year-old little girl. Her disposition was as sweet as her appearance. Being Russian she was a splendid linguist and spoke Russian, French, and German fluently. By the end of the year she was chatting away in English.

Russian children are often precocious. Their education forces them to become so. For instance, when still in their hobbledehoyhood, they are given a novel like "Anna Karenina" (by Tolstoi) to criticise and comment upon!

This winsome tot of six once gave the following answer to her French governess:- " Kira, aimerais-tu avoir une soeurette pour jouer avec toi?" (Kira would you like to have a little sister to play with?) - " Non, parcequ'alors je perdrais mon prestige." (No, because then I should lose my prestige.) Positively alarming! When, later on, cannons were booming and bullets were whizzing through the streets of Moscow, this mite with her sweet lively nature was like a ray of sunshine in the all-pervading gloom.

Meanwhile, instead of bullets, tennis-balls were whirring through the atmosphere nearly all day. Russians love tennis and made it their principal pastime. Not much else but the tapping of balls was to be heard those <sup>few</sup> weeks before we wended our way back to Mescow. This wealthy Muscovite family lived

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in a street as short as its name was long - "Triochsviatitel'ski pereoulok", meaning, the "Lane-of-the-three-holy-ones". In fact, by the time you had arrived at the last syllable, you found yourself at the bottom of the "Holy Lane"

The side of the street <sup>on which</sup> we lived ~~on~~ consisted only of the three fine buildings belonging to the family, and connected by a garden. Everything was on a lavish scale; except that the food with the card system got poorer and scantier as time went on. Only on Sunday was this less noticeable; for then we all trooped over to the grandparents' domain and partook of a hearty banquet at their patriarchal table. It certainly DID look patriarchal; for there was grandmamma, and grandpapa presiding at the head, with their retinue of children, grandchildren, governesses, housekeepers, nurses, etc., seated ~~on~~ either side of the spacious, lengthy board.

After the repast I was often asked to give them a little music in the reception-hall. The grand piano was simply a "dream" to play on - ~~a dream of~~ <sup>chosen</sup> Scriabine's ~~(a modern Russian composer)~~ ~~own choice~~. Altogether this house was so palatial the Bolsheviks turned it into some sort of embassy, or public building later on, I heard.

Autumn in that part of Russia seemed a very short season. Moscow soon adorned herself in her snowy raiment - raiment which became her best and in which she looked most typical.

Petrograd is a fine city; but Moscow is far more interesting from a Russian point of view. The Kremlin - a conglomeration of churches, monasteries, and palaces, surrounded by a fine rampart overlooking the river Moskva - forms the most attractive feature of this ancient city. The old part of the palace, <sup>from</sup> (where Napoleon is said to have watched the burning of Moscow) is one of the most fascinating bits of ancient Russian architecture extant. At the foot of the Kremlin in the Krasnoe Ploshad (Red Square) stands the extraordinary, semi-barbaric-looking church Vassilli Blajeni, built by Ivan the Terrible. Its oriental aspect and many domes terminating in spirals of variegated hues make it look as if it had something to do with that madman. As a finishing touch, this monster had the architect blinded (so the story goes), thus impeding him from ever building a duplicate.

(Record VII describes my daily life in Moscow and the overthrow of the Czardom.)

*of 1916 to 1917* RECORD VII  
 That winter also passed fairly uneventfully, except for the daily news of the War. The year 1916 was not encouraging for the Allies. Not being able to fully understand the Russian papers, I had to content myself with English papers two or three months old sent from home. The mail then took this length of time, because of the fortified state of the ocean and of its being the only means of communication with Europe.)

One really must say that if you choose to be a teacher in a private family, no better choice can be made than in a nice Russian one. They treat you as one of themselves and you always feel at home among them. They also possess more of the loveable qualities than the solid ones and are intensely "human" - both for good and for evil. A strange blending of the East and West of the democratic with the autocratic spirit in some of their ways and customs was also observable. For instance, it was the general custom to call everybody, whether millionaire or beggar, by their Christian name followed by the Christian name of the father in the genitive case:- "Maria Gregorevna (Mary of Gregory). This was somewhat bewildering and obliged one to enquire for the surname.

Another advantage experienced was the complete liberty accorded to dispose <sup>in</sup> of <sup>time for</sup> duties and leisure ~~time~~. The <sup>duties</sup> former were very light, and when over, you could go anywhere and do anything you liked. So I used to trot about giving private lessons in English - an item much in demand with the Russo-linguaphiles. My pupils included divers nationalities and denominations:- Poles, Czechs, Esthonians, Caucasians, Ukranians, Greeks, and Jews - such as only an immense country like Russia could offer.

One Jewish family gloried in the name of "Mimmelfarb"-(Colour-of-heaven! (Why do so many Jews have German names and often with such highflown meanings?) Well, this celestial family was exceptionally nice. Papa was a wealthy proprietor of shoe-shops all the world over. No matter to what corner of the globe I should eventually betake myself, he promised to provide me with the best quality shoe at the lowest price. His shoe-factory having fallen in to the hands of the Germans with the fall of Warsaw, he and his family had taken refuge in Moscow.

Meanwhile, he himself and his two sons took lessons from me, one after the other. How that man loved his shoes! I can still see him (and myself) poring over his lists of shoes and prices written in English, by way of exercising himself in English reading. The print of this exciting literature became so

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microscopic as we laboriously ploughed through it, and our eyesight grew so dim and blurred, we had to have recourse to a magnifying-glass and revive ourselves with hot tea and biscuits. This restorative (especially the biscuit item) was truly a magnanimous act on the part of my host; for anything in the food line was as precious as gold. He was indeed an exceptionally generous creature. When it came to payment, he simply presented me with a 500-rouble-note and begged me deduct whatever I fancied from it. (A most un-Hebrew-like way of doing business!)

Perhaps the most attractive among all my pupils was a young married Jewess. Because of domestic discordance, she had separated herself from her husband and little girl and had taken rooms at the other end of the city. However, she still felt it her duty to go and see them every day, even when people were being mowed down with bullets in the streets during the Bolshevik outbreak. In fact, she wanted someone to shoot her; but did not think it right to shoot her own self. So she courted death by parading the streets during those tragic days, and even placed her bed against the wall most exposed to the bullets. But death, evidently, would have none of her.

Later on, when I finally managed to escape across Siberia into China, she saw me off at the station and wept, poor soul. I wrote to her several times from China; but never got an answer. Who knows what became of those thousands of unanswered missives during those troublous times? I myself had two letters home censored and slices cut out. They referred to the tragic state of the Poles, ~~having to kill each other for the sake of their enemies~~ who, through the partition of their country, had to fight on both sides

Talking about letters, a very mysterious one reached me from the Russian front about this time. It was written in Russian - short, polite, and to the point. The writer expressed his wish to make my acquaintance through correspondence, as he had a "thought" to impart. I was mystified. How did he ever get to know my name and address? And what was that queer-looking signature at the bottom? All this did but excite my curiosity and I answered saying I would be very pleased to know his "thought". Whether my answer ever reached him, I never heard. But I got no more requests about imparting "thoughts". Only years after (when I landed here in Australia) did I solve the mystery and identify the author and the meaning of his "thought". I had met him previously in Petrograd; but did not then know he was employed in the British Secret Intelligence Service. Evidently he thought I might help him in his work. Hence his note.

Never will I forget my first and only Easter night spent in the Kremlin. As already said, Easter Night is the greatest in the whole Russian calendar. I

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wanted to see the famous midnight procession and hear the singing of the renowned choir of the "Ouspenski Sabor" (Cathedral of the Assumption). So I went with a friend. The crush was terrific. Not only did we not see nor hear anything outside the din of the rabble, but were nearly suffocated in the throng streaming out of the gateway. We managed, however, to extricate ourselves and walk miles round within the ramparts to another main entrance - only to find it locked! Feeling too exhausted to go any further, we simply followed the example of some other victims - climbed over the high iron railings - shut our eyes - and then let ourselves drop willy nilly into the chivalrous arms of some unknown cavalier who happened to be standing on the other side.

And now occurred one of the greatest events in the history of Russia - the overthrow of the Czardom and of Autocracy, March, 1917. It came about so suddenly it took us unawares and hardly seemed to be true. All the police disappeared as if by magic, and everyone was exclaiming "What will come next?" Thank God there was no bloodshed, but only processions of regiments playing the Marseillaise, and crowds of every description flying banners with the usual invocations to Liberty, etc. In fact, it looked like a national holiday with everybody parading the streets to the sound of music.

One amusing trait was to notice how impressed all the Russians seemed to be (so impressed that they even stopped their motorcars) at the sight of a crowd, however small, listening to orators (Trotsky - alias Bronstein - being one) haranguing the people in the public places - (a thing unheard of in all the annals of their past history.) Alas, it was but the beginning of an immense tragedy which still continues. God only knows how and when it will end.

Although Bolshevism seems to be the most natural sequence to Autocracy in Russia (seeing there was no strong hand to steer a middle course at that critical moment) the spirit of it was perfectly detestable. Insolence and chaos supplanted discipline and order. Soldiers did not salute officers, and a lady friend of mine had the pleasant surprise of a visit from a former housemaid of hers who had suddenly been elected head of the police of her district and had come to arrest her on some imaginary charge! All this tragic-comic state of affairs came about gradually, and only reached its climax under the second revolution, when Bolshevism triumphed over the Kerensky Régime (November, 1917).

So much has been written on this subject by competent writers I will not add a drop of ink more to the already sufficient overflow. But surely one could not but feel an intense pity towards the Imperial Family, especially for the child

ren who were simply innocent victims.<sup>4</sup> Whatever mistakes of government their parents may have been guilty of, the whole family was now to expiate ~~all the~~ <sup>the</sup> ~~crimes and mistule of all their ancestors.~~ <sup>deeds of their ancestors.</sup> Those who witnessed their last days of exile in Siberia <sup>1918</sup> (monsieur Gilliard, the French-Swiss tutor being one) testify to their courage and resignation in all their sufferings. The following is a little prayer found among papers secretly hidden after the wholesale murder at Ekaterinburg. Its translation into English runs thus:-

Grant us Thy patience, Lord, in these our woeful days,  
 The mob's wrath to endure, the torturer's ire;  
 Thine unction to forgive our neighbour's persecution,  
 And mild, like Thee, to bear a blood-stained cross.  
 And when the mob prevailing and foes come to despoil us,  
 To suffer humbly shame, O Saviour aid us!  
 And when the hour comes, to pass the last dread gate,  
 Breathe strength in us to pray "Father, forgive them!"

This breathes a martyr's spirit and will truly have won its eternal reward.

Another royal martyr at that time was the very beautiful Grand Duchess Elizabeth (widow of the murdered Grand Duke Sergius and sister of the Czaritza.) She had founded the Convent of Martha and Mary in Moscow of which she became Abbess. Here she opened a dispensary for the poor. (I visited the convent-chapel one day in the hopes of catching a glimpse of her, but without success.) At the Bolshevik Revolution she was dragged from her refuge, <sup>and</sup> ~~thrown down~~ <sup>thrown down</sup> with several other members of royalty, <sup>thrown down</sup> an old disused mineshaft in a small Siberian town - shot at - and then left to die of wounds and of starvation. Later on, her body was <sup>exhumed</sup> ~~unearthed~~ and sent to the Orthodox Mission in Peking, and then finally buried in Jerusalem by her brother and sister. Such was one of the many atrocities perpetrated - an unpardonable crime inflicted on an innocent woman who only begged to be allowed to spend the rest of her life in retirement helping the poor.

Communism means turning humanity into one vast piece of machinery with no more liberty of mind and conscience than a machine is supposed to possess. The present new generation of Communistic Russia is a genuine sample of what this machine is intended to produce throughout the whole world. Why, even the most drastic imperial autocracy in Russia never brought about such a complete annihilation of liberty in every form as the present Red Czars and their "Party" have done. Thank God there are other and better ways of solving the universal social problem than through this Infernal Machine!

(Record VIII announces the arrival of a French contingent and describes a Russian provincial Christmas.)

The arrival of 500 French soldiers and officers of the Heavy Artillery created a pleasant diversion for the foreign colony in Moscow. Our surprise when we arrived one Sunday morning for Mass at the little French church and found it filled with the French khaki uniform! The pleasant shock was all the greater as we had heard nothing about their coming. They had come as artillery instructors to the Russian soldiers; (for it was about the time of the demoralisation of the Russian Army.) But the Russian soldier, having lost his Czar, had also lost all interest in the War and had no wish to be instructed. So the French "Poilus" (Tommies) simply had a good time of it during their year's stay there, and willingly became the spoilt godchildren of the French colony. Though food was getting so scarce, the Russians still remained true to their spirit of boundless hospitality and also entertained them mostly <sup>(berally)</sup> liberally. As soon as Mass was over that memorable Sunday morning, all the congregation took the welcome visitors by storm and invitations were dealt out galore. Preliminary, conventional "introduction" was a thing of the past. "A la guerre comme à la guerre" was our motto. When I returned home and announced the cheery news to madam M. and my wish to invite the whole regiment to dinner, she simply said - "And why didn't you?" So the following Sunday I accosted the first group of officers I happened to meet and invited five of them (the number madam said she could accommodate) to dinner.

With the French effusive politeness and many exclamations of "Nous sommes confus", they accepted. Most entertaining they were too; for they not only entertained themselves with their voluble talk, but the rest of the party as well. And how they did drink! (Wealthy families still had a good provision of old wine in their cellars and this was always hospitably presented to the guests.)

The general topic of conversation was the War, of course. We were "thrilled" to get news direct from the French Front. They were delightfully optimistic. Nothing could shake their faith in ultimate success. One, in particular, (whom we called "Little Tot", because of his diminutive stature) was simply bubbling over with optimism. No matter what subject one broached, or what knotty skein one wished to disentangle, he invariably and smilingly concluded - "Cela viendra, cela viendra" (that will come, that will come.) Their departure out of Russia took place on the very eve of the Bolshevik Outbreak. (Strange coincidence! Or was it instinct?) Thus they escaped, just in time, back to their beloved France.

Another still more welcome surprise was the appearance of the BRITISH khaki uniform. When I heard half a dozen English Tommies were in the town, I flew off in quest of them and succeeded in tracking them down. They had been sent on a mission from England to show ~~pictures to~~ the Russian soldiers <sup>pictures</sup> of our tanks and <sup>so illustrate</sup> what we Allies were doing on the <sup>Western</sup> Front - by way of encouragement and stimulation. The show was exclusively for soldiers. - "Can I not be admitted too," <sup>"I asked,</sup> "seeing I am English and a pilgrim in a strange land?" - "Well, you can, if you do not mind being the only lady present and can survive the fierce stuffiness of the atmosphere." I assured them I could survive even the inside of a tank, and was forthwith admitted.

Once inside (not the tank, but the hall) I was truly enthralled with what I saw. Neither the fierce stuffiness rising in a steady crescendo, nor the fact that I was the only "she" present could abate my ardour. It would have been more to the point, though, could I have transfused my feelings into those Russian recruits and electrified them into action ~~when~~ on the front. But, alas the microbe of Communism was entertaining them over there instead of tanks. Only once did Kerensky succeed in rallying them into action again on the Austrian Front, <sup>where they won</sup> ~~and win~~ a signal victory.

And now by way of diversion, I might mention the delightful Christmas visit I paid to an English friend who lived in the Vladimerski Gubernie. Her husband was manager of one of the largest flax-mills in Russia. It was my first peep into Russian provincial life, and, sure enough, it quite savoured of olden times.

- like most stations in Russia -  
The station where she met me ~~was miles away from the town, as most stations~~ <sup>are in Russia.</sup> So we had to indulge in a 3 hours' drive in a "troika" before reaching our destination. We were so swaddled up in furs and wraps that not only were we reduced to immobility, but we did not even fall out when our sledge happened to upset. The cold was so intense, <sup>that</sup> our throats became inflamed if we exchanged more than a few words. As for our faces, they assumed a ghastly hue of yellow, blue, and green. But altogether sledge-driving with good horses and skilful drivers, was perfectly delectable. Only the thought of wolves when driving through woods somewhat blunted our enjoyment.

As these friends held the most important position in this provincial town, they had to do all the entertaining on Christmas Day. And most entertaining it was! The village priest (familiarly called "Pop" by the Russian country-folk) and all the bureautic set (their name is Legion out there) with their

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respective wives, came trooping in about eventide. They stayed on till 3 a.m. the following morning, which is the correct and normal thing to do in those polar regions. The best way of amusing them on such a long scale was to get them down to small tables provided with cards and such-like games, and then escort them every 2 hours or so to enjoy the hospitable company of the samovar. Suddenly the sound of chorus singing coming from the kitchen regions broke in upon the hubbub. A group of nuns had arrived and were singing their Christmas carols ~~←~~ another little Russian custom, at least in the provinces. }

My visit having come to an end, I left for Moscow again. Now did one fully realise how difficult travelling had become in consequence of the War. These friends told me whenever they went up to Moscow, they always supplied themselves with abundant provisions and a pack of cards to while away the time (sometimes 24 hours at a stretch) until the arrival of the train - an event even the station-master could not foretell.

After the overthrow of the <sup>Czarism</sup> autocratic Empire, trains were breaking down all over the country from overfreight. People were even travelling on the roofs of the carriages from Moscow to the Caucasus! Conditions were just as alarming in town with the trams. One generally had to cling by the skin of one's teeth to some imaginary foothold on these cars, with dozens of others clutching on behind to one's shoulders or any other member they could get hold of. Acrobatic feats were going on just as lively inside the vehicle as outside. The floor being very slippery from the snow of the passengers' feet, and the tramcar movements extremely abrupt and violent from overweight, the standers inevitably collapsed on the ground at each halting station, only to be jerked into position again at the re-start.

The other alternative - walking - was just as problematic. One never went out without measuring one's length on the frozen sidewalks and crossings. You quite expected the men to pick you up. But when you saw they took not the slightest notice, you understood the reason why. Every other second somebody was down. Had they <sup>men</sup> chivalrously come to the rescue, they surely would never have reached their own destination.

Moscow being hilly, it was really puzzling to know how to slide UP those steep frozen streets. When a thaw set in - ah! then it was a question of shooting the rapids. I actually performed this feat one day to my disgust. Having succeeded in beginning to shoot myself up the hill <sup>on which</sup> I lived ~~on~~, with a clutch at the garden railings at the end of each slide, I suddenly lost my

bearings and shot down at a much quicker speed (minus intervals) to my very starting point again. Had I thus persevered in trying to reach my goal, I should probably be still at it! But I really DID want to get to my destination. So I simply had to make a long detour on more level ground.

To render this sort of pastime still livelier, street illumination was left to the imagination. One simply had to flounder about and trust to Providence, to one's instinct, and to a stick or umbrella to come out alive at the tag-end. In normal times the town used to spend large sums of roubles to have the tons of snow carted away before the final thaw set in. But the Bolsheviks evidently thought madam Nature might attend to that, which she certainly did - at her leisure and in her own way, whether we liked it or not.

*It was*  
 One heartbreaking ~~sight~~ <sup>to see</sup> were the poor and the starving without cloaks and with faces livid with cold. By what miracle did those rags still cling to the beggars? We never went out without being assailed by dozens; for we lived near the "Hitrovka" - the notorious criminal quarter of Moscow rendered famous in one of Maxim Gorki's novels "Na Dniay" ("At the Bottom", or "The Lower Depths" - a stage drama and taken from real life. It was lately staged here in Melbourne.)

Times were becoming more and more serious and restless now. The following Easter and summer of 1917 were not very happy. How could they be? The Russian Army at the Front had come to a standstill. The germ of communistic propaganda was taking effect and many were betraying the good cause and deserting. One felt very sorry for the loyal Russians.

Besides these ominous signs of pending disaster, famine was also keeping pace with Bolshevism. Food was still abundant in the country. Vile speculation hindered it from entering the towns. When bread is lacking, only then does one fully realise what it means in daily life. A microscopic loaf of dust and straw - supposed to be bread - was given us daily by the card-system. Meat and tea, (minus sugar and milk) became the mainstay of existence as famine stalked nearer. Being with wealthy people I had not to suffer nearly as much as others. Provisions left over from former times eked out the meagre rations. Fuel was also running out and our stoves for heating were re-lit only every other day. What the poor must have suffered from cold and hunger those following ghastly winters, God only knows! Eye witnesses of the terrible famine that ensued in the Volga districts have given some idea of it.

(Record IX relates a tale with a moral to it and also the Outbreak of Civil War.)

The  
Last  
25 Lines  
of this  
are  
Quote

The summer of 1917 was certainly somewhat dismal. I still went up to Moscow on Sundays, and hereby hangs a tale, the moral of which is - "Don't be too conventional." One evening, whilst waiting for the train for Moscow (and perusing an ancient copy of the "Times" meanwhile), I noticed a very tall non-Russian-looking gentleman on the platform. He evidently noticed me too; for soon he came up and addressed me in English. Shortly after, I lost sight of him, as I had to get my ticket and then jump into the belated train. But as we approached the city, in walked the friendly stranger into my compartment - sat down on the empty seat beside me - and continued his conversation as if there had been no interruption at all.

On our arrival, I thought of bidding him farewell. But - as his way home happened to lie in the same direction as mine, - <sup>he asked</sup> "Would you mind my accompanying you?", (he asked) - "Oh, not at all". So again he renewed the conversation in his simple, gentlemanly manner. When we arrived at the gateway and said goodbye, we neither knew each other's name and remained just as alien as at the outset.

Three weeks later, when trying to discover the whereabouts of the American Consulate, whom did I meet in the entrance-hall but the friendly stranger! He turned out to be one of the members of the consular staff. Ushering me in in his delightfully simple way into the kitchen (this being the warmest place in their actual disorder of changing premises) he gave me the information I wanted. Hereby "hangs the tale". For it is thanks to this unconventional and friendly encounter I owed my escape out of the country, as will be seen later on.

And now I have arrived at one of the most tragic and exciting experiences of my life - the outbreak of the civil war. It had been looming ahead for some time, and it was just what we had been dreading all along, especially since that fatal step Kerensky took against General Korniloff. How excited we were over that dramatic chase across-country - Kerensky's men trying to arrest Korniloff and his Cossacks - and HOW relieved when that fine patriot, General Korniloff, escaped - only to fall later on, a victim to some treacherous Bolsheviki bullet. He was a brave, capable, military expert, and was striving to save Russia from utter chaos by vesting himself with the supreme command over all the Russian Armies. When approaching Petrograd with his handful of Cossacks to interview Kerensky to this effect, Kerensky, <sup>the actual ruler of Russia at</sup> (an expert with his tongue rather than with his sword), was jealous, and gave the order to have General Korniloff arrested. (Kerensky in his recent "Memoirs - "The Crucifixion of Liberty" - makes Korniloff out to be a traitor, of course.)

Life was <sup>growing</sup> getting still more precarious, as famine advanced with ever-increasing strides. The thought also of not being able to get out of this gigantic country, because of the alarming state of the railway and the difficulty of procuring a passage, began to haunt me. I simply went tearing about to all the Consulates extant and always returned home laden with good advice and the injunction to be patient, and wait, and see what would happen next. This I certainly did, as the following will relate:-

At 5 p.m. one evening, a heavy, lumbering lorry came thundering down the street I was just going to cross on my way to my Jewish pupils - the family that gloried in the name of "Colour of Heaven". As this street was very dimly lighted, I waited for the vehicle to pass. Behold, it was an armoured-car, full of ferocious-looking soldiers, bristling with drawn bayonets and of menacing aspect! I happened to be the only living thing present just then. But they evidently did not think me worth shooting at; for they simply glared at me and thundered on. - "Aha!", thought I, "you certainly look like mischief". Sure enough, a few hours later, the first fatal shot, which was the signal for the general outbreak, was fired.

An earthquaky feeling as of approaching danger pervaded the atmosphere that evening. All the upper class - the so-called "Intelligenzia" (in Russian)-had barricaded themselves in their houses. They knew they would be the chief victims in the coming conflict. Many of them took turns in keeping watch-(playing cards, meanwhile, to beguile the time), so as to give the alarm in case of at-<sup>(tack.</sup>

The Kremlin was the first target aimed at. <sup>The attack</sup> It was defeated by a handful of cadets only, who held out heroically for several days. Then the outburst became general. There was a howitzer and a machine-gun booming round our corner. How it was our house remained immune during those six days and nights of cannon and shrapnel, Providence only knows!

To be less exposed to the bullets, I was invited to sleep in another room somewhat more out of the danger zone. Poor old "mademoiselle" (the French governess) shared it with me. She had been turned out of her own quarters in town by some communistic cavalier and had taken refuge - weeping - in madam M.'s house. <sup>The latter</sup> Madam-M. (in true Russian fashion) had welcomed her in and treated her as one of the family. - "We can all share our last crust together and then die", she cheerily assured her. (This was also truly Russian.) I can still see mademoiselle coming into my room of an evening, pulling a long, long face, and saying - "Qu'est-ce-que vous pensez des événements?" (What do you think of

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about the events?) Nothing would reassure her that the little French village called Verdun, (where the fighting was then raging), was impregnable. To all my cheerios she would only exclaim - " Ah, votre optimisme me fait du mal!" (Your optimism does me harm.) Another time she would come in saying - " Vous savez que je déteste le cancan." (You know I detest gossip), and forthwith would launch out on a tirade of all the latest tittle-tattle of the day.

But let us return to the bullets and the room beyond the danger zone. Alack, after the very first night, mademoiselle's snores sent me flying back to my own quarters . I preferred the whistling of bullets to the sort of music she treated me to. How little do snorers realise what excruciating misery they cause to light, restless sleepers!

The following Sunday morning I thought I would venture out to hear Mass as usual in the little French Church some way off. It was very uncanny gliding along close up to the walls, with the few persons you met looking suspiciously at you. And then never to know which way the bullets were coming! Half way I was accosted by a young lady-officer in full uniform of the "Jen-ski Battalion" (Women's Battalion). For in that astounding country women were fighting and the men were running away! This Battalion was excessively brave and fought heroically on the front. But Kerensky saw they could not possibly endure the hardship of a soldier's life and had them withdrawn, after praising and thanking them for their patriotism and valour.

Well, this lady-officer wanted to know if there was shooting going on in a certain street. I said I did not know, and told her where I was bound for. She declared I would never get there alive, as the church was very near the telephone building they were bombarding that very moment. So - better turn back and enjoy her company whilst I had it.

Away we marched, discussing the events, when suddenly she disappeared into one of the numerous queues before the newspaper stalls. These queues before food shops were one of the pitiful scenes in Moscow. Their ends were often out of sight, and the poor patient folk sometimes froze to death before their turn came round. Bonfires were lit; but only the few standing nearby could profit by them.

Let us hope the world will know some day all the sacrifices Russia has made and the heroic deeds she has accomplished, during, and after the War.

She has had many splendid armies which have fought for the good cause, but which have necessarily succumbed, because of the cruel circumstances; - communistic propaganda, dishonesty, inefficiency, and treachery being the most fatal, one might say. As for the physical sufferings endured, God only knows what that has meant.

At last the nightmare came to an end. The Bolsheviks had won, and we - the so-called "Bourgeois" (mispronounced "Bourshui" by the masses) - were to be at their mercy. Hardly had the report spread that the fighting was over than all Moscow trooped out to contemplate the damage done. It was a weird and awful sight, rendered still more tragic by the very fact that the people themselves, and not the enemy, had committed this crime.

Tramcar-wires lay strewn all over the ground; hotels and big buildings were riddled with bullets, some with only the four walls standing, whilst others were reduced to charred heaps still smouldering, and the amount of smashed glass everywhere was incalculable. But the irreparable misdeed was the destruction of some fine bits of architecture in the Kremlin, one old gateway in particular (which even Napoleon had spared) being partly demolished. As for the wounded and the killed, few could bear to go and see them.

How ironical circumstances are at times! To be able to see the mischief done to the Kremlin, tickets were issued, without which nobody could enter. I had one given me. It happened to be the eve of some big religious fête-day. The Mounted Police of Red Guards kept the crowds back at the main entrance, but let everyone with a ticket pass through. Once inside, I made straight for the Church of the Assumption - listened to the exquisite singing and also contemplated the breaches in the dome made by the cannon-balls - squeezed myself out again through the disorderly throng going in and coming out at the same time through the same door - then found myself surrounded by the ruins of the fine old walls and monasteries, plus drunken Red Guards and soldiers. And all this lit up by the rays of the moon and with the sound of the angelic singing in the Cathedral still audible.

(Record X plays a tune upside-down!)

## RECORD X

The world now turned topsy-turvy and life seemed to be a farce, had it not been too tragically true. Officers were cleaning the streets; ladies and gentlemen were selling newspapers at public corners; waiting-maids had become head of the police ( as already mentioned ), and "moujiks" (peasants) and all the city scum were driving about in public and private carriages. A mandate was also issued that all the "bourshui" would shortly be marched off to the front to dig trenches for the soldiers. I claimed the rights of nationality. But that also did not exist anymore in the eyes of the Soviet Government. The Slav, however, is blessed with a <sup>happy-go-lucky</sup> philosophical temperament. All the Russians I ever met took - and are still taking - their misfortunes with admirable philosophy and adaptability.

I now redoubled my efforts to escape. There was no earthly reason for my remaining. On the contrary, I wished to relieve the family with whom I lived of one more mouth to feed, seeing how scarce food had become. But the Consulates still had only patience to offer me.

The Bolsheviks then introduced a sort of universal and minute inspection of all one's private goods and chattels. The banks were the first to be seized, and all the money and jewels were confiscated. Then inventories were made of one's private wardrobe, etc. But the Russian, being preeminently a theorist, nothing came of all this, at least as long as I was there. (~~Though now I have heard that the belongings I left behind have all been~~ <sup>Eventually all</sup> ~~stolen.~~ <sup>were</sup>)

One never went out without being sure of some Bolshevik taking a fancy to one's cloak. I still have a little sort of passport issued by the Consulate to all British subjects with the Soviet stamp on it. It was to act as a guarantee against any molestation.

Many British subjects were fleeing the country via Finland and Scandinavia. The Bolsheviks soon put a stop to that. Even if one did succeed in getting to Scandinavia, not more than two days' sojourn was allowed by the respective governments, because of the food question. So the only other outlet was via Siberia into China and Japan. But the objection was that it meant walking it - as many poor desperate refugees did later on. Comparatively few Trans-Siberian trains were still capable of surviving this "walk" or rather "run". Many <sup>of them</sup> had already collapsed on the way and

there was nobody left capable of reviving them. Besides, the few trains that were still struggling along were booked ahead and thousands of roubles paid for a seat.

What an extraordinary way I hailed in that New Year of 1918! Quite, quite "à la russe" (Russian fashion). My Jewish lady friend (the one who courted death and whom death spurned), being extremely fond of the French and English, begged me to bring any of my friends to her house, so that she also might have the pleasure of entertaining them. So on New Year's Eve I invited one of the French officers (a remnant of the 500 departed ones) and my "unconventional friend" (of the American Consulate) to her house. Here we spent one of the most delightful and most original soirées on record. Bread and sugar being very scarce—and only a very limited quantity allowed each person with the card system—guests often brought their share. - That <sup>was</sup> being the most precious contribution they could make towards the feast.

While the hostess was preparing the banquet, I entertained our two guests with pretty Russian music. Then, as the clock struck <sup>midnight</sup> twelve, we welcomed in the New Year with champagne (a relic of the past) and amusing Russian games. At 2 a.m. the correct thing to do was to go for a sledge drive. So out we sallied into the frosty streets all lit up by the lights from private apartments (street illumination being scarce during those years) - went for a slippery walk, rendered still more lively by random shots coming from nobody knew where - jumped into a sleigh - enjoyed an icy ~~icy~~ drive - and finally wound up with a hearty goodnight at 5 o'clock in the morning (after having dropped "France" on the way to return to his barracks and unfrozen "America" with a glass of brandy from out of his benumbed state.) Thus ended this strange, unconventional, but highly proper New Year's Eve "à la russe" of the four Allies.

Like all human pleasures, however, one's enjoyment of it was tempered the next day by the very unpleasant feeling of having gone to bed at 5 a.m., of having slept fully dressed on a couch, and of having only unwashed champagne glasses to greet one on awakening at <sup>noon</sup> 12 p.m. the following morn.

Shortly after, I spent a duplicate of this night (always in honour of the New Year), but with slight variations and still more "à la russe".

~~I~~ <sup>was</sup> being the only foreigner present.} - " If I come can I leave at midnight?," I asked. - " Yes, you can leave whenever you wish, as long as you come and give us music." When midnight struck I claimed my bargain. - " Go home! Oh dear me no! Why, the fun only begins now and the samovar is waiting." ( It would have been a breach of hospitality to ignore its sociable company.) - " But I'll be locked out if I don't return now," I remonstrated. - " Goodness, if that is all, our 'vostotchnaia komnata' (eastern room) is entirely at your disposal for the night." ( Wealthy Russians often rig out one room in eastern fashion and then use it as a guest-room when needed. This one was equipped in Turkish style.)

Dancing, music, sentimental card games, and politics, interspersed with sociable visits from the samovar, trotted us away into the little hours of early dawn. Talk about politics! When that dynamic subject was broached a terrific explosion took place. And when the din became too deafening, so that not even the yells were distinguishable, the host started tolling a bell. A lull ensued. But not for long. The storm was soon raging again. Thank goodness, somebody had the inspiration to suggest that there was such a thing as sleep and silence. The <sup>contestants</sup> ~~contendants~~ thought there might be. So all peacefully retired to solve their arguments in the arms of Morpheus. ( Only poor old "mamma" who shared my room, continued arguing aloud - even in the soothing embrace of that above welcome panacea. )

At 5 a.m. the following morning I found myself lying on a luxurious divan in the " vostotchnaia komnata " surrounded by beautiful Turkish tapestries and ornaments - the whole lit up by some mysterious little red light hidden away somewhere. But my room-mate ( the mother of my hostess ) was anything but mysterious. She had not stopped talking since the preceding eve. She talked out the old year; she talked in the new; she talked me to sleep. And I actually heard her still talking in her dreams when I happened to wake during the night - or rather morning.

Really, the Russians - of a certain class only - beat every other nation ( Latin races excepted ) in talking, or rather yelling. They all scream in unison and in a steady crescendo, and oh, how ear-and-nerve-racking it is!

These hospitable friends were typical Slavs by nature. Madam was an English pupil of mine. Though the lesson hour was expressly deferred till noon, she invariably was invisible till 1 p.m. - and his <sup>the matter of that</sup> lordship too, for Only once did he appear about midday, and that was because the Bolshebiks had summoned him to deliver his factory to them. He did not seem the least disturbed, but simply remarked - " I wish I could sleep and sleep and not wake up till Bolshevism had gone to the d....."

When I used to come for the lesson & only to find my hosts invisible for another hour or so →, I was invited to play the piano meanwhile, and thus entertain myself and them during the interim of waiting. This I willingly did. Then madam would suddenly appear in "négligée" with the following message:- " Would you play that passage again? My husband says his soul has been touched to the very quick by your interpretation of it! "

All these traits have been mentioned as they are strikingly characteristic of the Russian temperament, which is one of the most contradictory, intricate, philosophic, and interesting one could ever come across. Certainly there is nothing more charming socially than the Russian woman ← whatever her defects may be. → And no nation understands better how to enjoy life, or realises less the word "rush" than the Russian. They are also one of the most artistic people on earth. Consequently - like most artists - very temperamental ( in the American sense ) and frequently have to "let off steam" by going to places of entertainment in the style of cabarets and vaudevilles, where a great deal of gypsy dancing and singing <sup>prevails</sup> is gone in for. What jazz is to the American, gypsy music is to the Russian. Very charming and characteristic it is too. Just as natives (take the Maoris of New Zealand, for instance ) sway their bodies rhythmically to music when singing or dancing, these Russian gypsies set up a vibrating movement like an electric battery, till they work themselves up into a frenzy.

<sup>XI</sup>  
(Record describes my escape across Siberia.)

At last the thrilling moment of escape came in the form of a telephone-call one Sunday evening in February, 1918. Sure enough, there was my "unconditional friend" acting the chivalrous knight and offering me a passage out to Harbin, China, in one of the two carriages the American Consul had hired from the Bolsheviks at a high price. He forestalled the British Consul in getting his "citizens" across the frontier.

How I was ever to get there without money or food - that was a detail. But I MUST decide there and then, as the train was leaving the very next morning and all the places had to be booked. So I blurted out "yes" and dashed off to seek advice from madam M. Then did the true kindheartedness of the Russian show itself in all its generosity. She could not have helped me more than she did in my dilemma. She advanced the money for the ticket, my own being in the bank and in the hands of the Red Guard who would let nobody enter. When I presented myself at this bank - a newly -opened American branch - instead of payment, I was confronted with a bayonet. So I retired. She also gave me all the food she had in the house - a serious matter in those times when one was exposed to absolute destitution from one moment to another. She even stood in the queue to procure my ticket, and only bid me farewell when she had safely deposited me in the railway carriage. So I owe my life to the liberality of America and to this generous soul. I ~~will~~ <sup>shall</sup> never be able to pay my debt.

All that night I packed and finished only in time to jump into a sledge and drive off to the station. Our little band of refugees consisted of about thirty American citizens, I being the only <sup>Englishwoman</sup> Britisher. Thus we started off on our flight along the famous Trans-Siberian Railway, not knowing how, when, or where, we should finally land, or if we should ever land at all.

It is amusing to think how I began and ended that memorable journey. Starting in the company of a nice, homely, American quakeress, I ended by "eloping" with three French officers - as the sequel will relate. Our two carriages were French sleeping-cars. They had already been occupied by the so-called "Tovarishtshi" (the favourite Bolshevik word meaning "comrade"), who had left abundant visiting-cards in the shape of "B Flats" and "F Sharps" (the polite terms for bugs and fleas.) The other cars were all cattle and merchandise-wagons packed with thousands of recruits returning from the front.

So there we were being jerked along by any engine that took pity on us for three mortal weeks before reaching Vladivostok. As soon as we left Moscow

and got into the country, food became plentiful. We all pounced upon the fine white bread, milk, and butter - luxuries we had been deprived of for so long. No such thing as a buffet being attached to our queer-looking transport, we had to secure provisions at by-way stations. A funny sight our processions were - flying along the platform carrying every kind of utensil from a bottle to a saucepan! Boiling water is provided gratis at every station in Siberia; for the Russian is one of the greatest tea-drinkers living. We were also treated to the famous soups "Borshtch" and "Shtshi" (their taste savours of their pronunciation) at every grubby station-buffet, <sup>where</sup> we managed to scramble in a dinner.

Three weeks at a stretch is a long time to spend in any train, even a comfortable one, which ours was not, though it was luxurious compared to what other gentlefolk were doomed to travel in later on under the Bolshevik Regime. We whiled away the weary hours with mutual visits, chorus-singing, snowball fights, and talks with the peasant folk. All this was possible, as the train lingered on an average of one to five hours at most of the stations. Two of the more enterprising of the American escapees actually took French lessons from me. "Tipperary", of course, was a favourite song. As our water-pipes had burst and we were somewhat reduced in the washing line, the chorus generally ~~xxxx~~ ran thus:-

It's a long, long way to Vladivostok,  
 It's a long, long way to go.  
 It's a long, long way to Vladivostok,  
 To a nice, clean bath I know.  
 Goodbye to Krasnoe Ploshad (the Red Square in Moscow),  
 Farewell to old Moscow,  
 It's a long, long way to Vladivostok,  
 But my bath's there, I know.

I must say my lot seemed to be the most unlucky of all, and this is the reason why. As our train picked up stray American refugees on the way and space became limited, I soon found myself expelled from my rightful berth (not having anyone to defend my rights) and reduced to being an odd number altogether. It was then proposed that I should spend three nights consecutively in everybody's else's compartment and make everyone uncomfortable in turn. So there I was knocking at my neighbour's door when the fatal hour to retire came, and relegating poor young bridegrooms (for of course they must all be young honeymooning couples - Americans married to Russian girls) to the gentlemen's department to make THEM uncomfy in THEIR turn. However, they were most charming about my forced intrusion. So for the sake of peace I swallowed

my feelings and played my part with the best grace possible.

The cause of all this upset was a couple who got into my carriage some days after the nice quakeress nurse had alighted at Samara in the Volga district, where she joined a British nursing mission. Fortunately the rest of the company was very jolly altogether and showed true comradeship in our common plight. One young Russian bride, in particular, was simply delightful. We had the greatest fun (during my forced intrusion) erecting ramparts against another pending nocturnal invasion of "B Flats and "F Sharps", by filling up all the breaches with any available object within reach. Then, when all was ready, she tried to hoist her own self on to the upper berth, there being no steps to hand. This feat took as long<sup>to</sup> accomplish as our ramparts did to construct; for every attempt was overcome by our laughter.

This charming, goodnatured, young creature told me she had had to marry her American bankclerk in such a hurry on the very eve of their actual flight (which, by the way, was also their honeymoon), that there had been no time to buy a wedding-ring. She meant to procure one at Vladivostok. As for her adoring bridegroom, she meant him to enlist straight away on their arrival in the States. - "A man is not a man unless he fights for his country", she declared. (A good wife for any shirker!)

Another welcome member of our fugitive band was a Congregational minister. He revived our drooping spirits with pleasant talk, hot cocoa, and general cheeriness. A young Russian, with a fine singing voice, and evidently an artist to his finger-tips, was another source of distraction during that endless, monotonous journey. His broken English was the delight of those young Americans, who amused themselves trying to twist it into some sort of intelligible form. - "If you the head push out, it smash will be," he was heard to remark to a little Roumanian child in our company who was looking out of the window. When he treated us to Russian songs, we all flocked in to enjoy the concert; especially if he got the two ~~Russian~~ railway-guards to join in whilst he conducted.

Only once did we send his singing to Jericho, and that was at the station of Samara. No wonder! For there was he parading the corridor to the cheery refrain of - "Pocket all your troubles and smile, smile, smile" - (and this at 4 o'clock before dawn!) The words were timely, but not the time.

Surely there is more genuine kindness in this weary world than otherwise!

To give one instance (among several) - the piece of friendly advice the Congregational clergyman proffered me in consequence of a "speech" I made to the peasants at one of the stations in Siberia. The arrival of the Trans-Siberian "Express" was a great event for these simple, isolated folk, and they flocked to the station for the occasion. I was holding forth in my broken Russian how fatal it was the Russian soldiers would fight no more; for it only meant a prolongation of all the horrors of the War. The clergyman, who was standing near by, overheard a Red Guard say in Russian - "If that 'barishnia' (Miss) does not stop, I'll shoot her" - and warned me to be more cautious. The hint went home. I held forth no more.

As regards the scenery, it was most disappointing. Not that we really expected much. Day after day the same expanse of monotonous plainland all covered with snow, or leafless forests (for it was still winter) with a little wooden village, or solitary station far and wide apart to relieve the endless uniformity. It might have been less lifeless and more interesting at some other time of the year. But we traversed it in the least attractive months - February and March - when the snow is no more sparklingly white with the keen frosts and piercing cold. In fact, it was not nearly so cold as we expected - fortunately for us.

The two interesting bits to see - the Baikal Lake and the Ural Mountains - we MUST of course go through at night, and our engine (which otherwise simply crawled along) suddenly shot off at a terrific speed, so as to make sure of getting through all the fine scenery before daylight. It is from the many-coloured Ural Mountain stones that the Russians make the pretty pieces of jewelry sold in the shops; especially the charming little Easter eggs the ladies wear as necklaces during Eastertide.

As for Lake Baikal, it is renowned as an important convict station. We only saw phantom shadows of the rugged rocks and cliffs reflected on the ceiling of our carriages. Another interesting bit was Transbaikalia near the Mongolian frontier. The racial types (some of them called Buriats) of these regions in their strange native garb and habitats soon made us aware we were now approaching our goal - the Far East.

(Record XII continues playing my adventures "en route" and then - Eastward-ho!)

Train speed in Russia has never <sup>been</sup> great for two reasons, I understand. First, because more wood than coal is used for fuel (the soil producing more of the former), and then because of the tremendous distances. Great speed for great length of time would have exhausted the travellers. In normal times the distance from Petrograd to Vladivostok was covered in ten days. The pendulum swung too far in the opposite direction in our case and exhausted us through its sluggishness.

And now occurred the first exciting incident. At Ufa - a town on this side of the Ural Mountains and near Siberia - our train was held up for eight hours in the station. This is what happened:-

Most of the recruits we were dragging behind us got out here, but were met by the Red Guards who demanded their weapons which they refused to surrender. A skirmish ensued right there in the station with our two carriages in the thick of it. We put out our lights, drew the curtains, and as bullets were flying (six ~~crashed~~ of them crashed through the window of our second carriage) we women lay on the floor, so as to be less exposed.

Meanwhile, other trains kept on arriving. Then the passengers began quarrelling as to whose train should first go off (the station-master having fled for his life.) Thank God none of our party was wounded, and that after eight hours of suspense we were able to continue our flight.

Incident No. 2 was a collision we had with another train - fortunately at a standstill in the station further up the line, and also full of Bolshevik recruits. It took place at 4 a.m., when we were all sound asleep. I was made aware of the event by my handbag bumping down right on to my nose. All the other baggage followed suit, the gigantic "omnibus" milk-bottle crashing down and its contents flowing down the corridor.

My carriage companions were so fast asleep it did not seem to impress them much. They only remarked they thought it was "I" who had bumped down from my upper berth! I remonstrated that even if I had, I would never have produced SUCH a commotion! The Bolshevik recruits in the offended train evidently thought so too; for they were furious and declared we "Bourshui" had done it expressly and they would punish us with murder.

However, some of our party convinced them it was just as disagreeable for us as it was for them; that if we had planned the collision expressly we certainly would have deprived ourselves of that treat and been absent. ( This latter idea had not dawned upon them. But when it did, they evidently thought it might be so; for they let us continue our journey without further menace.)

Incident No.3 was of a very different nature. It referred to the three French cavaliers with whom I "eloped" from Vladivostok. This is how it came about:-

At the Siberian town of Omsk a remarkably tall and fine-looking man was seen discussing something with the head of our band. He and two comrades declared themselves to be French officers of some mission. Being stranded out there, they asked leave for a passage on our train, as they also were bound for the Far East. This was denied them, because they were regarded as suspects. Besides, it was contrary to orders to accept any strangers.

Nevertheless, hardly had our train started, when lo and behold, who should appear at the end of our corridor but the three "suspects"! They had bribed the guard (as they told me afterwards) and installed themselves in his compartment. When our "boss" heard of this, he wired to the French Consulate at Irkutsk (our next destination) and begged some member of the staff to meet our train and examine the papers of the three heroes.

This was done. All being found in order, the suspicion was removed and they were allowed to remain in peace in their bribed quarters. Several stranded Russians fleeing the country addressed us en route with the request to board our train for the Far East. - "We will exist in the corridor or any corner", they pleaded. It cut us to <sup>the</sup> quick to have to refuse them on the part of our ~~xxxxxx~~ "captain".

At Irkutsk two disagreeable incidents befell us. Two trunks were stolen from our luggage-van ( luckily for me not mine. ) To "make up" for this piece of luck, two unwelcome packages were thrust upon me by a relative of the person I was going to in China ( as if I hadn't enough of my own, plus the burden of my own life! ) One was a sack containing

~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ clothes; the other, a piece of sackcloth containing a... "secret", I was told. - "A mighty suspicious-looking one", methought. How can any decent-minded soul inflict such kind consideration on a poor stranger flying for her life across those dreary wastes? And it is always - "I hope you do not mind?" As if any sane person would not, and also long to give them a piece of their mind as well. Anyhow, we hoisted that suspicious-looking "secret" on to the rack and forgot all about it.

Only after a week or so did it remind us of its obnoxious existence by a still more obnoxious odour emanating from its presence. This perfume finally became so intrusive, we felt we had a right to investigate its origin. So down came the "secret", and I gingerly conveyed it to the two railway-guards for inspection. They unceremoniously ripped open the sackcloth and revealed it - a sturdy leg of ham evidently in high discomfiture at the lengthy delay of being consumed! I generously bequeathed it to both the guards; but do not know if they kept their "secret", or shared it with others. May I never be confided with such a smelly one again!

Altogether this record train trip was desperately wearisome, rendered still more so by our forced and lengthy stoppages. Generally only the stations of the principal towns - far and wide between - lay on this interminable railway track. The towns themselves were hidden somewhere beyond the horizon. Speculation and bribery (at the time of the laying down of the rails), plus technical reasons, were the cause of this anomaly. Irkutsk was one of the rare exceptions. But it did not look particularly interesting to explore. Most of those Siberian towns were replicas of each other - broad roads with rows upon rows of red and green-roofed wooden houses sprawling over the vast plain and dominated by the brightly painted domes and glittering crosses of the Greek Orthodox churches. Rarely did one perceive anything ancient in the architectural line - due to the nomadic life and the customs of bygone times. Some of the towns we passed through at night might have been more attractive, especially those built on hilly ground and nearing the Far East. But then, of course, it was night.

XXXXXXXXXXXX

Vladivostok AT LAST! Heaven, what "elephantine sighs" ( a French expression ) of relief we heaved when that most picturesque of ports hailed in sight! These sighs were all the more genuine, because of the fact that when we arrived at Chitã ( the frontier town between Siberia and North Manchuria ) we found the line blockaded by General Semionoff, a Cossack, who was fighting the Bolsheviks in those regions. So we had to make a long detour and go further north through the Amur district, thus prolonging our trip by several days.

As we approached Vladivostok a strange phenomenon caught our eyes - a frozen sea with traffic on it! But the harbour itself was in its normal liquid state. Oh, how welcome was the sight of those friendly British and American battleships after the strain of Bolshevism! One felt like hugging every British and American Jack-Tar one met - so great was the reaction!

Hardly had our weary train crawled into the terminus and deposited us, than our little band dis-banded - to seek that "nice, clean, bath" of Tipperary fame. We barely recognised each other, when, later on, we met again in the streets and restaurants.

A dance was given on one of the American cruisers that same evening to welcome our arrival. But I still felt too "grubby" and exhausted to go myself. In fact, I was the only one of the whole party still doomed to wander on without respite. For my goal was Harbin - a town through which we would have passed before reaching Vladivostok, had it not been for the blockade.

Only the three French officers who had joined our band in Siberia happened to be going on there direct. - " Can I have the pleasure of continuing my journey under your escort?" - " Certainement, mademoiselle. Cela nous ferã honneur. " ( Certainly, that will do us honour. )

So away I went under their protection. Three days later we landed safely in Harbin, China.

~~And so my adventures in Russia have come to an end. May the playing of these Records of Concords and Discords have given pleasure both to travel-~~and music~~-fiends and/lovers!~~

*music*

## Record XIII

*(Cumb. 50451  
inadvertently shipped over)*

Before starting for China let's put on for a moment again the record I interrupted at Vladivostok. I spent two days there, sleeping in the train with a few of the remnants of my American escapees. After making ourselves mutually recognizable by that "nice, clean bath" of Tipperary refrain, we passed the time exploring the town (which seemed to possess only one main thoroughfare) and meeting in the restaurants. What impressed us most were the many harbours—(enhanced at the time by the sight of British and American cruisers)—the splendid views from the numerous heights, and the whole town climbing up and down, as it were, the rugged sides of the hills.

The name Vladivostok means in Russian "Control-of-the-East". It is considered by many as the finest harbour in the world. <sup>But</sup> (does not every fine harbour have this opinion of itself?) There is ~~certainly~~ a strong touch of the East about the place, what with Russia's <sup>numerous</sup> numberless polyglot races, ~~the~~ Chinese, ~~and the~~ Koreans <sup>& others</sup> swarming about. These latter were mostly swathed in what was supposed to be "white" flowing robes. <sup>Lilliputian</sup> An odd little erection (reminiscent of a miniature transparent top-hat) put the finishing touch to the priests' attire. Both Korea and Seoul are charming sites to visit, to judge from hearsay. One's sympathy goes out to the Koreans whose country is so ruthlessly dominated by Japan.

Now the reader has had a little trot about the town let's jump into the train for Harbin and KEEP in it for a while. Otherwise we'll never get to China. It was about a three days journey to Harbin, and not a very exciting one, either in scenery, or events. One amusing incident was a platoon of Chinese soldiers lined up at every station (I do not know why, for China was neutral during the War), and every time I looked out of the window at them in company with my "chaperones", they all presented arms (such was the effect of the Allies' uniform, I presume)—and made us feel like passing royalty. Then, when a Chinese general boarded our carriage and kissed my hand saying "Tai-tai" (the only Chinese word I remember and which means "lady") — forsooth I felt like a queen all <sup>over!</sup>

Most of the time we spent trying to get through our daily ablutions — (a difficult task when all passengers made for the wash-basin at the same time) — eating and drinking (an item I was well provided for by my escort) — exchanging French and English lessons, and discussing things in general.

The senior officer of the trio was an exceptionally fine-looking man well over six feet. When robed in his Russian fur coat he was simply overwhelming. A special bag had been made for it and weighed I forget how many pounds. He said he wanted to sell this coat for a very reasonable price. (I am only so sorry I did not buy it; for I could have made a complete winter equipment out of it for myself.) This handsome giant was Manager of all the Railway Department in France.

The next youngest officer was of a studious disposition. He was very pleased to read my English books and also "air" his knowledge of English on me. The youngest was a little fellow and the liveliest of the three. How he made us once laugh by presenting a roasted chicken for dinner with both legs sticking up like lightening-conductors. - "Je vous fais mes excuses pour ce poulet malélevé" (I make my excuses for this ill-bred chicken), he apologised.

An excessively stout, good-natured American engineer in the next carriage also contributed to the general hilarity by his visits to us. My heroes so encouraged his gastronomical propensities, one really wondered if they were limitless. The only small feature he possessed was his mouth, strange to say; for it must have been very hard worked in the long run.

At last we arrived at Harbin - a good-sized, straggling town, ~~and~~ coveted both by Russia and Japan for its very important railway connection. The Chinese-Manchurian Railway - a prolongation, so to say, of the Trans-Siberian - was constructed by the Russians, who thereby obtained certain concessions on it. The station with its network of junctions is the most imposing and important feature of the place. I was welcomed on to its platform by the husband of the lady <sup>with whom</sup> I was taking refuge ~~with~~ in the rôle of companion.

Bidding a cordial farewell to my three "chaperones", I thought to myself - "Well, if Madam B. makes as pleasant an impression upon me as her husband does, all will be well." We drove to the Russian quarter of the town and alighted at the private house of a doctor, whose wife took in boarders - as most Russians were doing then. Here I met madam B. ~~At~~. My expectations were disappointing. I saw at a glance she was not his equal in social standing - an intuition fully justified later on. However, like most Slavs, she had all the exterior charm of manner - which

the French call "la fascination slave", - and we got on smoothly till her true self came out.

The first night spent in madam B.'s company was by no means reassuring. Her snoring was outrageous! The more I tried to mitigate it by expressive ejaculations, the more I seemed to encourage her. I ended by burying my head under my pillow. Even that <sup>stratagem</sup> recourse was of no avail to my ultra keen sense of hearing. (Snorers ought to be relegated at night to Limbo and padded rooms - miles away from sensitive ears.)

One night, (before madam B. had started her snoring-symphony), there was an ominous thud outside our door. - "It is a burglar making off with your trunk" (which was lying in the hall), she assured me. We both jumped up and listened at the bolted doors. - "Get the revolver", said madam in a stage whisper. Now this was the very last thing either of us wanted to touch. Her husband, (who had gone to Peking) had bequeathed to us a handsome little revolver before leaving, in case of need, and had even instructed us how to use it - to madam's dire terror. The first thing we did was to get the fearsome object out of our sight by hiding it in the depths of a cupboard; <sup>the burglar might take a fancy to it.</sup> ~~(and also to hide it away from the burglar in case~~ ~~XXX fanned it.)~~ Now, I was not going to give this chance to any ruffian, and so did not budge. Neither did madam B.

Not hearing anymore ominous thuds, nor getting any answer to madam's bangs on the door-panels and her cries of "kto tam?" (Who's there?), we courageously opened our doors. Lo and behold, the doctor's wife, (who had been awakened by the noise), had come to tell us a large rat had been caught in the trap and was careering up and down it in the cellar! So ended the story of the burglar, the trunk, the revolver, and the rat.

Harbin did not strike one as an attractive place, except for the Russian quarter. But for business people it was highly inviting. For the jumble of nationalities trading there followed their respective instincts IR-respective of any code of law or regulations, I was told. In those abnormal times, however, it seemed to me a godsend haven after the strain of Bolshevism. It WAS so nice not to have to count every mouthful of food and also to be able to go out without being shot, or having one's coat taken off one's back.

The town was divided into three parts (as most of the big towns in China are) - the European residential quarter, the business quarter, and

the Chinese quarter. As the Russians had built the former, they, of course, predominated there. Nearly all the <sup>small</sup> little private villas were leased out to the railway employers, who, in their turn, let as many of their rooms ~~out~~ out of a general total of 6) as they could to the ever increasing number of refugees. Even the bathroom and cellar were sometimes included. The result was, one often saw queer-looking mushroom growths bulging out of the sides of these villas and containing the belongings of the inmates, who had to push them "out," because there was no means of pushing them "in".

Besides these villas there was one very fine street and Town Hall, the <sup>and</sup> Russian/Polish churches, several shops, and all the different Consulates. The streets were all very broad (for time and space mean nothing to the Russian) and embellished with gardens, trees, and miniature parks adorned with rustic Chinese gates which emitted a tinkling sound when opened. In summer all this green made this quarter look quite becoming.

The business section, called the Pristan, was divided from the residential by the railway. It consisted of a jumble of European, American, and Chinese shops, banks, offices, and all that the business paraphernalia entails. Though it was such a medley and a somewhat lawless place, it was surprising to see how the shopkeepers - whether Russian or Chinese - trusted the honesty of any stray customer. If you ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ ran out of cash when purchasing, they simply made you take the goods on credit and pay the deficit when next you happened to pass.

Chinamen, of course, swarm - the women being hidden away. Supposing you wish to buy a piece of tape, <sup>at least</sup> a dozen (~~at least~~) Chinese males will rush out and serve you. Some of the Russian names on the shops were very quaint. One was actually the name of "Nameless". When I asked the wherefore, I was told Siberian ex-convicts often fancied such expressive names, so as to hide their own identity.

Beyond the Pristan stretched out the Chinese Quarter with the Catholic Mission Church and Sisters. The outskirts of the town looked simply frightful, ~~at least~~ to judge from the only two walks, or drives that existed. <sup>(We tried both one day and found the cemetery preferable.)</sup> One led to the cemetery; the other to the slaughter-house. - "I like visiting cemeteries", madam B. remarked. - "The tombstones give me good thoughts", she added quaintly. - "The road leading to it is enough to land one <sup>sure</sup> a corpse there", thought I.

However, we managed to survive the return trip, and by way of reviving our spirits madam suggested our visiting the Movies (in default of Talkies.) Alack, the very first and last scene which greeted our eyes was a young bridegroom lying prone before the tomb of his departed bride! The coincidence struck us as so comic—(seeing our aim in going there)—we did nothing but laugh and so attained our purpose after all.

A band of 200 American engineers and mechanics was another source of enlivenment in that strange town. They had come over at the invitation of Kerensky to put order into the chaotic state of the Russian Railway. When they reached Japan, the Bolshevik revolution had begun and they were not allowed to carry out their work in Siberia. So half their number stayed in Japan, and half came to Harbin. Here they lived mostly in the trains, and all the work that awaited them consisted principally of mutual entertainments given by them and by the Russian and Polish colonies; frequent dances in their Railway Hut, and wanderings about the town in quest of further such-like "work".

One day I had the pleasure of a visit from that stout engineer of the epicurean propensities. - "I thought you might feel lonesome", he kindly said, "so that's why I came." - "Apportez-lui la boîte de bonbons", (Bring him the box of sweets), madam B. also kindly said, intuitively knowing it would be welcome, and also following the instinct of hospitality innate in every Slav.

A branch of the American Y.M.C.A. was also established in Harbin at that time. They created a healthy atmosphere in that somewhat smutty place. True to their democratic spirit, they strove to bring about a friendly feeling among all the different nationalities there—(irrespective of country or creed)—by initiating sports, classes for languages, social gatherings, and bringing what help they could to any unfortunate prisoners who happened to be passing through. They were truly a godsend to me, as I was shortly to experience.

Before turning this record and playing the other side, I must mention a very strange French woman I happened to run up against somewhere or other. As I was just then feeling the irksomeness of companionship to someone with whom I had not much in common, I found the exuberant merry goodnature of this little creature most welcome. She frequently spoke of her child Tamara (a Caucasian name) and her devotion to her. - "C'est

tout-ce-que j'ai au monde" (She is all I have in the world), she used to repeat wistfully. I said I would like to see her. But there always seemed to be some obstacle to this meeting; either the child was out, or <sup>(or-so on.</sup> ~~unwell,~~

Madam B. one day asked her if she would like to go to Irkutsk and bring back a trunk of clothes she had left in her home there. The mysterious creature said she would be delighted and started off with madam B.'s housekeys and her return ticket prepaid. But though we heard she had reached Irkutsk and had got hold of the trunk and contents, no "mysterious little madam" ever came back again. She had disappeared trunk and all into *the "Never-never" (as the Australians say)* ~~no one knew where!~~ As for Tamara, we discovered afterwards this tot existed in her "mamma's" distraught imagination only. Strange how some women are possessed with these hallucinations! Later on I came across another such queer specimen, also possessed with an hallucination; but of a different kind. (Her "fixed idea" will be described further on.)

#### Record XIV

About this time Mr. B. was still in Peking enjoying the wonders of that fascinating city. His prolonged absence caused madam B. to have a fit of hysteria, and I had to forward telegrams worded by her in such a way that sent him flying back posthaste. But before he arrived, she gave vent to her pent up feelings on me as well. This sent me also flying; first to the British Consulate, and then to the American, in quest of a change of air. Both Consulates came to my help: the former by telling me of a nice refuge in a doctor's family, and the latter by recommending me to the Y.M.C.A., who forthwith promoted me teacher of their English classes for Russians and Poles. So I bade farewell to the B.s and betook myself to the medical quarter of <sup>Harbin</sup> (the town) in a shady avenue called the "Bolnitchnaia Ulitza" (Hospital Street).

The family consisted of a Jewish doctor blessed with the name of "Unicorn" (in German), his pleasant little deaf wife, and small son - a bundle of nerves and brain. The doctor was suffering from a paralytic stroke, and so was unable to practise. My duty consisted of giving that little bundle of nerves and brain an English lesson every day.

A less nervy pupil was a young officer of the "White Army" - (the anti-Bolshevik Army.) He had a real mania for taking lessons and only seemed happy when doing so. Rather than forego his lesson, he used to come at 9 p.m. every evening and wade through interminable translations he had

made on "The application of the Temporary Governor (Admiral Koltchak) to the population", (~~Admiral Koltchak was then ruler over all Siberia.~~ Another noble patriot who strove to stem the Bolshevik tidal wave - and, failed.) This young ex-officer was a fine type of the loyal, upright young Russian. Who knows what became of him, poor fellow?

My other lessons consisted chiefly of taking English classes of Russians and Poles at the Y.M.C.A. The Slavs have such a passionate love of study it is a real pleasure to teach them. There was only one lady pupil who simply diffused disagreeableness upon all around her. Not an innocent word could one say without her giving it an unpleasant twist. She gloried in the name of "Decayed Fish" (the literal translation of her name in Russian.) Surely it suggested a moral tendency in that direction?

To create a more sociable atmosphere for these classes, groups of students were seated at tables, and under the stimulus of tea and cake were encouraged to hold forth in their broken English - the burden of which fell heavily on the teacher. An embarrassing question was once asked at one of these tea-parties, namely, which was the most correct pronunciation in English - the American or the English? As I was the only English teacher there - (the others being American) I tried to answer diplomatically by saying, each side would mutually maintain theirs was the most correct; that it was a matter of taste for the foreigner to choose. ("English spoken American understood;" was an amusing notice once seen in a Harbin shop.)

Later on the Y.M.C.A. shifted their quarters to the building of the Chinese Police Station. What an intensely disagreeable impression this <sup>made</sup> place upon us, when, towards evening the dismal howls of Chinese delinquents being punished with the "Knout", or some other instrument of torture, broke in upon our social gatherings!

Like many Social Service Societies, the Y.M.C.A. was criticized by some of the local Russians, who mistook the aim of their work among them. - "Why don't they give us bread, instead of teaching our youngsters to break each other's noses?" (referring to the boxing-bouts), they remarked. How amused I was when I saw the shocked expression of two Russian girls who had just witnessed a boxing tournament. - "Bezobrazny!" (Outrageous!) they gasped! I, at least, championed the Association; for, as already mentioned, they brought a healthy, virile, Christian spirit with them - much needed in that strange hotch-potch of a place.

There was also a big Polish colony - always increasing with the influx of Polish refugees from Russia. As I frequented their church and tried to form a small choir among them, some of the Y.M.C.A. <sup>also</sup> kindly offered their help. ~~XXXXX~~. So there we were on Christmas and Easter Day singing our chants (the same melodies, of course, at the same time) in Polish, Latin, and English - to the "Bon Dieu qui comprend tout" (to the good God Who understands all), as the French say. On ordinary Sundays, the Poles were so unreliable in their attendance, my choir was reduced to a "duo" between myself and the organ, unless one or two of the American Catholic engineers, who had voices, came to my help.

There was one Polish family with whom I was very friendly. The parents proved much more engaging than any of their ten children. In the true hospitable Slav way, all strangers were welcome to their little home. One evening when we were in the full swing of a merry dance on their verandah and I was entertaining them with some Russian music, three Japs sauntered in - sat themselves down beside us - called for cigarettes - and showed they meant to enjoy themselves too. ~~They~~ They had mistaken our family pastime for some Geisha entertainment, we conjectured. ~~So~~ So we just humoured them, handed them cigarettes, and then got one of them to play the Japanese national anthem in his turn. When they had had enough, they sauntered out ~~again~~, probably thinking they had witnessed some foreign version of a Geisha performance. ~~XXXXXX~~. We were quite amused at this unexpected contribution to our programme.

To prove the genuine kindheartedness of the Slav, I found that these good friends (though poor themselves and very reduced for space) had actually given shelter to a pretty young Russian refugee, whom one of the daughters had found stranded at the station. She had escaped from Russia, where she had had to leave her husband - a young officer - behind. To my friend, madam D.'s consternation, she carried a small revolver about with her, assuring madam she would use it upon herself should she ~~hear~~ hear her husband ~~had been~~ killed by the Bolsheviks.

Later on, we heard her husband also had managed to escape and had joined her. But, like most refugees, they were penniless, and what became of them, we never knew.

It was about this time I was promoted to become a member on the staff of the British Consulate. I had expressed my wish to do something in the

way of war work to the British Consul. To my delight he one day offered me the position of typist. I could not type; but that evidently did not matter. I would learn. Before being fully admitted, I had to go through the formality of swearing on the Bible my loyalty to my country and not reveal anything that might be harmful to her. This I did most willingly.

The staff consisted of the Cónsul, a young Vice-Consul, and an elderly Russian secretary of Jewish extraction and with a German name - as most ~~X~~ Jews have. They all gave me a cordial welcome, and it was in their company I spent some of the most interesting moments of life. The young Vice-Consul was of a somewhat hilarious, artistic temperament, and very fond of animals, of which he kept several specimens. Being a good ~~mi-~~  
~~nic~~, he occasionally entertained me by imitating his parrot's ejaculations. The elderly secretary had the dignity of a Mephistopheles. ~~But being very "temperamental" and touchy (although kindhearted), one never knew what his next mood might be.~~

One day the Vice-Consul, wishing to ensure a happy home for one of his numerous kittens, presented me with one. The subsequent miaouwing of the little brute when being taken away, drew Mephistopheles from his lair in high indignation. - "This is the British Consulate, and not the Zoo!", he expostulated in his strong foreign accent.

My task was ultra interesting when it meant copying out the latest telegrams about the War. These had to be decoded first - a stiff job at times. As they came through the Chinese Agency, the English translation was often most amusing and sometimes alarming. I also had to type out a very lengthy treatise on the Chinese-Manchurian-Railway written by the Consul himself and which was highly appreciated at Headquarters in London. The Vice-Consul rattled off one copy "express-train-wise"; whilst I followed in the wake at goods-train speed.

*Insertion page 60*

(I now understand what the British Consul meant, when he announced to me the tragic news of the murder, by adding "... but I cannot tell you all." For the cases containing the charred remains of the corpses and all the precious Records were actually in his keeping, having been temporarily entrusted to his care, pending final consignment.

*Insertion X*

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Besides the interest of the work, there was also the attraction of seeing interesting, or perhaps just "important" personages, appearing on the premises. The most worthy of all these - (to judge by subsequent events) - was the British Consul of Ekaterinburg, in Siberia. At the moment nothing was told me of the motive of his sudden arrival from Siberia. But some time after I read about his loyal and strenuous efforts - at the risk of his life - to save the lives of the Imperial Family, murdered in July, 1918. Hence his two sudden and short apparitions at the Consulate.

*Insertion X*

The British High Commissioner at Peking passed through several times. But on hearing of his disapproval of the fair sex working in offices, I spared him this grievance by disappearing in time.

Unpleasant scenes occasionally substituted pleasant ones by way of variety. An apoplectic-looking Russian officer in quest of a passport once made the room ring with his excited remonstrances when denied one. Another time, a brazen-faced young woman strode in and insisted on seeing the Consul. When refused, a highly disagreeable game of battledore-and-shuttlecock was played over my head between her and the Vice-Consul, till a summoned policeman made his appearance at the door and gently put an end to the volley of bandied words. Then again, it would be a pathetic drama between a poor Indian, a Russian woman, and their infant son; the parents both weeping and refusing to be reconciled.

A more cheery apparition was a very buxom and jovial Canadian officer. I can still see him gaily tripping into the room - flourishing his cane and suiting his gait to the refrain of that absurd stuttering song-"K-K-K-K-Katie, my beautiful K-Katie," etc.

Meanwhile, other events of a very different kind were taking place. The Allies were sending over regiments to help the Russian White Army fight the Bolsheviks in Siberia. A part of the Czecho-Slovak Army had already arrived in Harbin after traversing<sup>that</sup> region. Being a Slav race and bitter enemies of their rulers - the Austrians - they had no wish to fight the Russians, but tried, on the contrary, to make themselves their prisoners. During the War they were very leniently treated by Russia, their only restriction consisting of not crossing the frontier. They succeeded so well (chiefly through a well organised secret correspondence) in uniting their dispersed units, they were able in time to get their whole Army to Vladivostok - their goal - via Harbin.

But the Allies - upon whom they depended for ships - found it more convenient they should first return to Siberia again and keep order there against the ever advancing Bolshevik forces. It seemed hard upon them to have to return when they were so near attaining their aim. But they DID return and DID keep order ~~out there~~, and also helped to stem the Communistic tidal wave for awhile. Alas, just as much as I admired them then, as great was my disillusion of them later on, when they showed up in their true colours.

*at Harbin*

And now followed the arrival of all the other regiments. The first to appear was the Middlesex Regiment. An amusing pun on the name was related by a Highlander in France. On being asked by a French peasant if he was a man or woman (alluding to his kilt), he answered - "Neither, I belong to the Middlesex Regiment." - "Those women from Hell!", was the epithet the German Kaiser was wont to hurl at them. Anyhow, our joy at seeing these British Tommies - (the only British Regiment I ever saw during the War) - was unbounded, so much so, that we marched up with them with banners flying and band playing to the British Consulate. Here a speech was made, and then away we marched again triumphantly through the beflagged town.

Later on, a Japanese regiment arrived, and then an Italian.

The station was the chief magnet during those momentous weeks. When I heard Italy was to appear, I flew down and greeted several of the "Bersaglieri" in their own musical tongue. The Bersaglieri Regiment was created in 1836 by Captain della Marmora, under King Carlo Alberto. It is a Light Infantry Battalion and is known for its speed of movement, now accelerated by whole regiments being equipped with bicycles.

The Y.M.C.A. did all they could to welcome these poor stranded Tommies - of whatever nationality - with sports and entertainments. They produced an Italian film "Excelsior" for the Italians, whose hot Latin blood was mightily stirred when their national flag of the "Casa di Savoia" appeared on the scene. The sociable teapot was also trotted round by way of creating a genial atmosphere. But I know these poor southerners would have welcomed much more "un buon' fiaseco di vino" (a good flask of wine) than what seemed to them a beverage in the medicinal line (though they were too polite to say so.) A Roman I was talking to, when he discovered I was a refugee in China, naively exclaimed - "Come! Una signorina tutta sola in Cina!" (What! A "Miss" all alone in China!)

Meeting a Bersagliere one day, I gave him a message from that dear Mother Superior in the Chinese Mission, to enquire if her nephew was in his regiment. For once a message was delivered right, and she had the pleasure of a visit from him, she told me later on.

These Italians never got as far as Siberia. Precious glad they were too. For they had just come from their tropical colony Eritrea, and their one wish was to return to their "Italia". But our Tommies got well into that dreary region, as well as others who landed at Murmansk by the White Sea.

~~The Soviet now takes good account of this visit in its present negotiations with England. We all know little good came of it at the time.~~

Whilst this game of "general-post" was going on, let us trot back again for a moment to my shady, pleasant den in Hospital Street and see if anything was astir there. Sure enough, a new visitor in the form of the young future American Vice-Consul had taken the room next to mine. His name also was reminiscent of a fabulous monster. When seated between him and the little "Unicorn" at table, I really felt like Alice in Wonderland.

The doctor's ~~little~~ deaf wife consulted me as to the arrangement of his bedroom. In those precarious times, everything assumed a makeshift shape. The bed was concocted in three parts. How he ever got into it, and still more STAYED in it, was a real feat of dexterity. As for the washing apparatus, the basin was so microscopic I feared he would not see it.

He certainly was one of the most original, strangely mannered, amusing youths I ever came across. He loved children, and consequently petted the little Unicorn. He also loved work (like most Americans) and used to make that typewriter of his rattle by the hour to the accompaniment of whistling. Now if there is an infallible brand of ill-breeding for the Russian, it is whistling.

One afternoon I found the poor doctor sitting patiently, as usual, in the dining-room, with a martyr's expression on his face. And why? Simply because "America" was gaily whistling in his bedroom on one side, whilst his own nephew was trying to imitate the whistling in his room on the other side. - "Kak v' traktire!" (Like in a "pub."), he ruefully observed.

Besides whistling, "America" thought he would like to go in for learning French. - "Delighted", said I, and off we started. We really had the greatest fun with those lessons, especially over the pronunciation; till one day he roused my wrath with his rude, mercenary behaviour, and I put an end to them. ~~xxxxxxx~~

However, I soon felt pity for him in his homesick moods, and trotted him down for the only possible walk in that outlandish place - along the broad navigable river Sungari. The effect was wholesome.

A bigger undertaking than that was trying to find him a bride. This task he fortunately accomplished for himself. He was longing to wed - a desire in which many of those Polish mammas showed deep interest. But the fair candidate never had good enough teeth for his taste - an indispen-

able condition with him, seeing what fine ones he was blessed with himself. He finally married a Russian girl who spoke but very broken English and he still more broken Russian. (I sometimes acted as interpreter.) But before this happy climax of later date was reached, he was promoted to become a fully-fledged Vice-Consul whilst still in our medical quarters..

Life at the British Consulate that year was entertaining as well as interesting. Invitations to dinner were frequent, and my Russian music was well in demand. There was, however, much too much cocktail-drinking. (Had it been tea or coffee, I probably would not have <sup>found</sup> it so.) <sup>But</sup> I certainly did feel well under my Consul's protection. A Japanese officer - who thwarted my passing on the public road once, would have thought so too, had he continued his altercation ~~with me~~ on the rights of public thoroughfares! - "So much for the vaunted Japanese politeness", I exclaimed. "It seems as genuine as the veneer on many of their gim-crack wares!" Even then in that year of 1918 their flag was to be seen flying from many of the finest buildings in Harbin - a prophetic sign of the present hostile feeling between them and the Chinese.

#### Record XV

And now for the most overwhelming of all those events - the ARMISTICE! That this beneficent thunderbolt should have unhinged the minds of many tortured souls, or killed them outright for sheer joy, one could believe. But we seemed too far away to be thus fatally struck. We were simply stunned and somewhat bewildered - as if something had suddenly stopped that ought to be going on, and we were not quite sure that it would not go on. When we WERE assured that it was not going to continue, the diverse Consulates paid reciprocal visits to discuss the best way to celebrate the "dénouement". The result was a general meeting of all the different nationalities in the Town Hall and speeches for the occasion made by their respective Consuls.

General Horvat - once Governor of Harbin - represented Russia. He was a very capable and fine-looking man, and attracted the sympathy of all those present with his noble and diplomatic delivery in a difficult and delicate position. (For revolutionary Russia had betrayed the Allies and had ceased fighting long ago.)

Another safety-valve for letting off the steam of our pent-up spirits took a lighter form. It consisted of two dances: one in the Town Hall,

and the other given by the American engineers in their Railway Hut. At the former every cavalier was allowed to choose his lady partner and escort her to <sup>the</sup> ball.

The United States were well represented. They immediately created a democratic atmosphere, as they usually do - whatever their surroundings may be. This was still more palpably and forcibly brought home at their own dance given at their Hut. Fox-trots, One-step, Two-step, and Jazz ran riot. To stimulate the din still more, revolver shots were fired to announce breathing intervals in the general vortex, accompanied by snatches of folksongs which drowned even the music of the band. All this proved a strong antidote to either stiffness or boredom and set everyone at ease.

I do not know whether the English or the American colony was more numerous in Harbin. Perhaps the latter, because of the American engineering contingent. Both colonies were there either for business, or consular reasons; (except for a few odds-and-ends of refugees like myself.) After the Russian came the Polish colony for numbers.

Well, after recovering from the first shocks of peace, there was a sort of lull, when everybody seemed to be trying to digest the fact of there being no more war and adjust themselves to this "abnormal" state of things. The Polish colony was the most affected. - "Have we not regained our country after so many years of servitude?", they proudly exclaimed. Every Pole wanted to hasten back and settle down on a little piece of that liberated land they could now claim as their own. Soon the exodus began. But more of this later on.

We were now in mid-winter and had drifted well into 1919. The cold was as great as in Moscow and as intense as the heat was in summer. The spring was generally ushered in with dust-storms - (altogether a charming climate, you see!) These storms were too horrible for words. They sometimes raged for two or three days. The men protected themselves with huge goggles; we women with ~~a~~ layers of veils; but to little purpose.

The Chinese start their New Year about February, and the festive Day lasts a month. Squibs, bombs, and dragon-parading heralded it in and out during that period. It is their greatest festival in the year. Then Easter ~~(the greatest feast for the Russians)~~ was the next to approach.

Little madam Unicorn ~~(whose daily menu year in year out consisted of~~

meat-patties for breakfast, meat-patties for dinner, and then again meat-patties for supper) was fattening up two fowls, (by way of variety) for the traditional Easter repast. One was ~~supposed~~ a gander; the other was supposed to be a goose. Anyhow, they were both equally ferocious. Never could I go out of that front door without their both making a vicious lunge at my legs. I simply had to keep them at bay with my umbrella and then make a dash for it.

Well, as the fatal day which would end their wicked tendencies was fast nearing, madam confided to me that as the goose was not on good terms with the gander, she had decided to anticipate their decease. Now, the moral of this story is - "Beware of hasty misjudgments". For ~~le~~ and behold, when those misunderstood delinquents were executed, they both turned out to be ganders!

By now Dr. Unicorn had recovered enough from his paralytic stroke to be able to partially resume his practice. <sup>For me</sup> This meant another move on, ~~for~~ ~~me~~, as he required my room. I was very sorry; for I had spent a happy time with them. So I put an "ad" in the paper, offering to teach English for my board and lodging. This was answered by a fine-looking couple - an aristocratic lady of Russian-Swedish descent, and her husband - an ex-Governor of a Siberian province. ~~They~~ They are now farming in New Zealand. I had the pleasure of meeting them there again, after saying farewell to them 13 years ago. ~~3~~

My transition from the "Bolnitchnaia Ulitza" to the "Ajiheievskaja Ulitza" (I'm not swearing, but just giving my new address) was most entertaining. A Czech Major, (to whom I gave English lessons), chivalrously sent a young officer and a couple of soldiers in a motorcar to transfer me and my belongings to my new quarters. When this ~~gadduck~~ cavalier saw the number of my trunks, he pulled a long face and ruefully remarked - "Had I known this, I'd have brought a lorry". Well, he DID go back and get a lorry. ~~xxx~~ After piling my luggage on to it and hoisting me on to the top of the pinnacle, we gaily drove away. On the way <sup>we</sup> met some Canadian Tommies. Seeing me thus enthroned and surrounded by a military escort with the Czecho-slovak flag flying, they evidently mistook me for a spy prisoner. For they stared hard, and then smiled a significant smile.

*Record XV* Never <sup>shall</sup> will I forget the terrific summer spent in these new quarters.

The heat was tropical. ~~xxx~~ To aggravate it still more, an epidemic of

flies and cholera broke out. The trees were literally black with flies. The problem of eating was worse. One had to cautiously convey each spoonful (hermetically sealed en route with one's hand) from covered plate to mouth. Even then, a fly or two would succeed in popping into the aperture at the critical moment.

I was then working in the Standard Oil Co. - "Socony" - in the busiest quarter of the town. Money value was the reason of this change of surroundings. I was advised to accept this position, and so reluctantly left my congenial one at the Consulate. Now I found myself swimming in oil and grease, instead of tapping out interesting telegrams. Though working with good American friends, it was really cruel to have to walk down that long dusty road to the office in the scorching heat every day. There were no buses or trams in that benighted town (though I expect there are now) - only a few desultory rickshaws and carriages. Even these <sup>never</sup> appeared when you wanted them.

Once when I was trudging back in the sweltering heat, taking a shortcut across some fields, I saw two Chinamen standing sentinel over some object lying prone on the ground. As I approached. They made frantic gestures ~~to me~~ not to come nearer. The prostrate figure was a corpse stricken down with cholera. I fled.

Even then I had not much of a haven to fly to. The company was pleasant; but heaven preserve me from ever tumbling into such an inferno of a bedroom again! There were about 60 Chinese bootmakers just underneath! The din of hammering accompanied by their still more infernal language (which really only the devil could have concocted, so hideous did it sound to one's ears) was enough to render one a corpse without the aid of cholera.

These Chinamen never slept. If they did, they took it <sup>in</sup> turns, so as to ensure the unintermittence of the noise. *If you had the hardihood to* You could not even open the window to indulge in a little breathing and revive yourself in the stifling heat, <sup>would be</sup> ~~but~~ you were knocked down by the stench of the oily food.

A gay Scotchman (also living in the same family) one evening at dinner declared he would tackle those Chinamen that same night and so ensure a peaceful rest for us. I had my misgivings as to his method of accomplishing this, ~~feat~~. The very thought kept me awake till midnight, ~~and~~ then the drama began.

When the pandemonium reached its height, our gallant knight - true to

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promise (and also true to his whisky bottle, I fear) - came to <sup>our</sup> rescue. His method of "ensuring a peaceful night" consisted of greeting the Chinamen first with a shower of compliments in Chinese (which we fortunately did not understand), and then with a shower from the hose (an ablution they much needed, I'm sure.) Now, to squirt a Chinaman with water is the quintessence of insulting him, I was told. What followed I could not see, but certainly heard. I jumped up, fearing a breach might be made in my window-pane which was on the ground-floor.

Luckily, at this juncture, someone of a more diplomatic temperament than our would-be <sup>benefactor</sup> protector arrived upon the scenes and convinced the Chinamen of the beneficial effects of water upon the human body. His words, evidently, had more of the effect of water on their enkindled spirit than the water had had on their bodies. For the conflict fizzled down again to its subterranean vaults beneath our weary heads.

Later on, we heard "Scotty" had gone completely off the track; only in a more serious way than <sup>by</sup> squirting Chinamen with a hose. We were really very sorry to hear this; for he had a kind heart, in spite of his flighti-<sup>ness.</sup>

#### Record XVI

Now I must speak a little about my Czech pupils whom I was in the full swing of teaching at that time. They were all units of their liberated Army, and had created in Harbin a temporary Consulate to represent their newly-formed Republic. I was then as much in admiration of them as I was afterwards disillusioned, when they revealed their true character. The Major was my chief pupil. Though he posed as a woman-hater and had expressed his wish to have a male instructor, he soon found it quite bearable to put up with a female one after all. The fun we used to have over those lessons with his broken English! (I really wonder which of us enjoyed them most?)

He was very "temperamental", as ~~xxxxxx~~ most of the Czechs <sup>are</sup> were - (due to their gypsy blood?). I tried to humour him according to his mood. Twice he appeared tragically glum. Only some time after did I discover the reason. On both occasions he had returned from very sudden visits to Siberia, where the Czecho-slovak regiments were still helping to stem the onward march of the Bolshevik Army. But some of the units had also become infected with communistic ideas and had rebelled against their superiors. Consequently, they were tried and shot..... Later on I was asked to word telegrams in

English for them, requesting the Allies to send them ships; for their inland country <sup>then</sup> possessed no such things then.

Another enjoyable pupil at the Czech Consulate was a young lieutenant - also very "temperamental". He was much given to philosophising upon the mystery of life and succumbing to the effects of his somewhat dismal conclusions. By way of cheering him up, I once took him for a pleasant walk I had discovered in a Chinese garden nearby. - "Give me flowers that cost nothing and which last forever", he demanded in Russian of the stolid Chinese gardener (the latter all spoke "pidgin" Russian). And the everlasting bouquet was forthwith presented to me.

And now it was my turn to be distracted. Cholera had broken out in the house we lived in. It was a question of flying off there and then, or being quarantined on the premises for a fortnight. We all chose the former alternative and fled to the four winds. I bethought myself of a nice little refuge with my Polish family. Some time previously they had let a room to a Czech officer on whose behalf I had applied. I certainly thought when he saw my dilemma (the hotels being crowded with refugees) he would be only too pleased to let me have it for two weeks. Meanwhile, he could return to his quarters in the train, where the whole regiment had resided till then.

Now did the true Czech reveal itself. He turn out! Oh dear me no! He was much too "comfy" to undergo such inconvenience. All this was expressed with the polish and veneer which made the Czech manners so seemingly charming, but in reality all the more despicable for their insincerity. I threatened to bring tanks along and bomb him out of his snug den. - "And what shall I do, meanwhile?", exclaimed my little Polish friend, the hostess. But it was all of no avail. Cholera or no, he was not going to be disturbed out of his ease. The "czech" in him had betrayed itself. The process of disillusionment had begun.

So I betook myself to a friendly Englishman and his little Russian wife - refugees themselves in a military hostel. Nevertheless, they welcomed me in - gave me a shakedown in their sitting-room - fed me on curried chicken every day - and made me wipe my shoes thoroughly on the doormat before crossing the threshold (these latter precautions against the fear of cholera microbes.)

My second big disillusionment was the betrayal of Admiral Koltchak by the Czech Army. He was ruler over Siberia before the Bolsheviks drew it

into their clutches. An ardent patriot, he implored the help of the Allies to save that country from the tentacles of Communism. We entrusted his safe-keeping to the Czechs, who betrayed him to the Bolsheviks, who, subsequently murdered him. Of course plausible excuses were given by the Czechs for their treachery. But treason is always inexcusable, no matter what the circumstances may be.

Another Czech incident (not to their honour either) occurred also about this time. A young officer, named Gaida, made a pretentious "coup" (for the love of notoriety) against the port of Vladivostok, by bombarding it from the sea. Strange to say, my poor dear hunted friend, princess G., happened to be standing on the seashore at the critical moment - a target between the two fires! She related this alarming coincidence to me years after when we met in Paris.

Now, though my own personal experience (and other people's also) forced me to recognise the false nature of the Czechs, I do not condemn them wholesale as ~~such~~ <sup>traitors</sup>. There are sure to be many who are true and sincere among them. I am only criticising the men I met out there. What their women are like, I do not know. The Czechs in China told me they had not the charm of the Russian women (and I quite believe it from the very few I have met.) Hence, the frequent marriages between the Czech soldiers and the Russian girls.

Well, another distraction of mine at that time (besides flying from cholera and threatening unchivalrous officers with tank bombardments) was changing my surroundings, both for residence and for work. Willy-nilly I was fated to be always on the move. The "Socony Co." had transferred its premises to the Chinese quarter where cholera was raging. I really did not feel like risking my life even for a good remuneration of Chinese "taels". So I resigned. I was sorry; for these American friends had been kind to me. As for my abode, I HAD to leave, because again my room was required. So there I was trundling myself and belongings (without military escort this time) to the site of the American Consulate.

Just under the <sup>Consulate offices</sup> ~~official~~ representation lived a Russian lady-dentist (a profession the Russian fair sex very much favour), and a tom-cat. A young Roumanian clerk used to come in for meals. I joined this happy trio and spent an interesting winter with them. We met only at mealtime and for a short respite in the evening. There was a fourth member in our

queerly-assorted household - the little factotum-maid, whom I called "the invisible spirit". <sup>For</sup> (She always managed to do her housework when nobody was about and disappeared when somebody WAS about.) The lady-dentist - a true artist in her work and the quintessence of cleanliness - was busy all day in her torture-room; <sup>while</sup> the clerk and myself <sup>were</sup> at our respective offices. Only the tom-cat was always at home to receive visitors. He really was extremely human in his ways - in fact, uncannily so. If you rubbed his fur the wrong way, he purred and emitted sparks and electric shocks.

My bedroom was a "peach" <sup>(as the Americans say)</sup>, except for the yawning chasms between the boards which constituted the floor. Woe betide if anything dropped down! It disappeared forever in the unexplored depths beneath. The fair dentist said she had lost any amount of gold fixtures that way. The American Consul's wife declared she had mushrooms growing on the floor of her bedroom. But the spotless instruments of torture lying about, and the sparkling sets of brand new false teeth direct from Philadelphia, awaiting their final destination on the breakfast table, impressed one even more than the mushrooms upstairs.

All this, however, did but enhance my life there, - for it was all so very original, and originality always attracts. Even the Chinese sentinel (all the Consulates, except the British, went in for sentinels at that time) prancing up and down on the snow outside my window all night to keep himself from freezing, poor creature, was a welcome sound to my ears.

As for my work, behold me muffled up to the eyes in furs, gliding (if not tumbling) along the snowy and frosty roads every morning to the Pristan, and then disappearing into the International Banking Corporation of New York - now amalgamated with the New York City Bank. The flighty Scotsman worked in some firm next door and occasionally paid us a flying visit.

My work at the bank was very light - typing and filing - and well remunerated. I was the only lady there. The other members of the staff consisted of the Manager (a Scotchman) and two American Accountants - all three good sport and good company. The rest were Chinamen - quite civil in their manners, but oh, so unpleasant in their native habits and ways, <sup>(especially if one had to sit and work in the very thick of them all.)</sup> A stray Esthonian (if you know what that is) joined us later on. He used to bewilder the American staff by politely shaking hands all round on his arrival at the office every day - a custom he soon left off when he saw

how little they appreciated it.

The cold was so intense our coats in the lobby outside would freeze and we would have to thaw them down before being able to put them on again. At other times, when the torrential rains set in, the roads would be flooded, and only a boat ~~(so to say)~~ could land one safely at the entrance. All sorts of nationalities used to call at the bank - attracted by the word "international", and I was often asked to act <sup>as</sup> interpreter.

One day a highly disagreeable scene took place between a young Russian couple and the staff. The Russians wished to withdraw a sum of banknotes they had recently deposited there. When the Accountant produced this sum, they found the banknotes he gave them were not in such a good state as those they had given him, and asked for better ones. The fact was, the rouble at that time (seeing the chaotic state of Russia) was hardly worth the paper it was printed on. Several different currencies - the Chinese "tael", the Japanese "yen", and the Russian "Kerensky and Horvat" banknotes - were in circulation, and money speculation was playing a brisk game of battledore and shuttlecock with the two latter. One day, Russian banknotes only of a certain sum would have any value; the next day, ~~for~~ even hour, the shuttlecock would fly in the opposite direction, and it would be the other way round. Then, by way of variety, only those notes which were flawless in appearance would be valid, and so on. (This reminds me of my dentist friend one evening "curing" and turning out flawless banknotes by dint of a magnifying-glass, dental instruments, and a hot iron.)

But let's return to our Russian customers waiting in the bank. They certainly seemed to have a right to their request. The young American Accountant thought otherwise - simply because he had no better notes in hand to offer - and told them so. This infuriated the man and he became abusive. His wife strengthened the dose. Fearing a tragedy in the revolver line, I slipped out and took refuge in the flighty Scotsman's domain.

Here I found another drama being enacted. He was pacing his office in great pain, having that very moment splintered a bone in his arm under some weight. So there I was between the two fires, and not much use at extinguishing either of them.

When I thought the "revolver stage" must be over, I returned to the bank. Another performer had entered the scenes now in the form of a Chinese policeman. The irate customer, however, was not intimidated by his

presence and lavished his abuse on him as well. Hereupon, a Russian policeman was summoned, and Between the two they managed to get him out—swearing dire and speedy revenge. I was sorry for him to a certain extent; for he had a right to his "say" - or rather "yells" - in the matter. After that experiment, the bank refused to accept any more current-accounts in Russian banknotes.

- "Why do you shut cats up in the money-vault?", I asked one day of the same young Accountant. A dismal howl from that quarter seconded my query. Sure enough, when he opened the massive door, out darted the scared beast. - "That vault is the tomb of dead matter", quothed he. - "Yes; but that dead matter is what keeps us alive", rejoined I.

#### Record XVII

Among my varied acquaintances at that time was a peculiar little English woman married to a Pole - both refugees from Petrograd. I can still see her tiny Union-Jack sticking out of her window, as a signal for her pupils to come in there for their lessons. Like the afore-mentioned French woman of "Tamara" fame, this one was possessed with the hallucination of always having a surplus stock of ready-made positions of any description to bestow upon all her pupils - just for the asking. These pupils soon numbered zero; probably because they had all hastened to fill up those imaginary posts!

This same little philanthropist once related a trick she played on a so-called friend of hers - a Russian woman with a somewhat shady propensity for kleptomania. Strange to say, whenever she visited my friend, the contents of the latter's purse disappeared. To verify her suspicions, my friend one day left her purse empty on the table with the following words scribbled on a piece of paper - "Sorry, no cash this time", and went out of the room for a moment. When she returned, both visitor and purse had disappeared for good.

<sup>please</sup> But do not conclude that everyone in Harbin was "dotty".xxxxxxxxxxxx  
 xxxxxxxxxxxx. There were plenty of nice, sane people there, as there are everywhere. One of these was a very dear American girl working at her Consulate. As we both felt somewhat stranded at times, somewhat "désillusionnées", we chummed up and cheered each other from out of the blues into rosier hues with our mutual sympathy. One of these rosy tints took

the form of a dance I gave one evening on a wee scale in honour of her and my Czech friends (with whom I was still on a footing of complete illusion). Neither the lady-dentist, nor the Roumanian clerk, nor even the tom-cat made their appearance, for fear of being one, or rather three-too many, so I understood. But they sent in a fine samovar for tea purposes, and cups and saucers instead, which was extremely considerate of them. My friend, the American Vice-consul (working just above) also sent down his substitute in the form of a gramophone, which was also very much to the point. What with all these contributions, the entertainment was most enjoyable, even though we had to open the doors and dance into the adjoining chamber of dental reminiscences.

The spirit of unrest now seemed to have decreed that I must needs move on again - probably just because I was so "comfy" in the company of my strange trio. I am sure I did not want to go. But this time there was absolutely no option, ~~for the simple~~ <sup>reason</sup> The landlord himself wished to inhabit the apartment.

So I now went to live with a countess and her three giant sons - one so tall I wondered when he would stop coming into the room the first time I saw him. Having a worthless husband, the poor woman was hard up, and so let rooms, as most of the Russians families were then doing. I really was very sorry <sup>for</sup> her. But still that did not soften the hard boards or rickety trestles upon which she had concocted a so-called bed for me; or save my teeth from cracking over the small-shot they encountered in the wild game her boys brought home as contributions to the poor food.

These sons strove to make up for their dishonourable father. But how I did bless them when they came in at all hours of the night and disturbed my scanty slumbers! Only once did noise lull me to sleep, and that was when the three giants gave a dance. The din was so terrific I was knocked senseless. Then the collapse of the dining-room table with all the crockery-ware on it put the finishing touch and sent me flying into <sup>oblivion</sup> (the arms of Morpheus.)

Besides the three giants, their tall mother, the factotum Chinaman, and myself, three magnificent St. Bernard dogs completed the household. These dogs scared every mortal from approaching the threshold, like three guardian lions. I was so amused once at having to come to the rescue of a pupil

of mine, a little French officer. He seemed to go through life smiling, happy man! (The first and last thing one remembered of him was a smile - but not "Cheshire-cat-wise".) So there he was on the safe side of the gate smiling at the three "lion-sentinels"; but not sufficiently reassured of the effect of his smile upon the roaring beasts to open and come in.

Xxxxx Two of those fine St. Bernards had a tragic end. Some wretch poisoned them. I'll never forget the torture I went through with them that live-long day. As fate would have it, the three giants were out shooting, and I was alone in the house with the factotum. I begged him to put an end to their agony by shooting them. But the guns were with the boys. When they returned, the poor creatures were dead.

It was now the spring of 1920. A general exodus of Poles, Czechs, and Hungarians was in full swing - all anxious to return to their homes in their newly-created Republics. There certainly was no affection lost between these different nationalities. The Russians rejoiced to see the last of the Czechs who had over-ridden their country for the last two years and had betrayed them in every respect. The Czechs hated the Poles (whom they grossly mishandled, I heard, when they were trying to evacuate Siberia). The poor Hungarians and Magyars were the worst <sup>off</sup> of all. Many of them were the so-called "prisoners-of-war" of the Czechs, and all the world knows how unjustly their country was dismembered after the Treaty of Trianon. (Read the work by Sir Robert Donald - "The Tragedy of Trianon" <sup>(II)</sup>)

The staff at the bank had also completely changed, and - for the worse. The young <sup>u</sup>accountant - (the one who shut cats up in vaults by mistake), when discussing the outlook for their <sup>new staff members</sup> future substitutes, said - "Let's pray for them. I was a good little boy till I came to this blooming town", he ruefully added.

I now decided to leave the bank and rest, or at least relax through the ghastly summer heat, and then get a further glimpse of China before my wandering spirit bore me off elsewhere. Providentially there was the Y.M.C.A. offering me a hearty welcome back. Thank God there was one clean, healthy, Christian refuge in that begrimed city! The staff consisted of three American men, one very gentlemanly young Russian ex-officer, and a very young Czech poet - the only normal and loyal one among my Czech acquaintances, and, consequently, regarded as abnormal by them.

(He happened to be in love, in spite of being normal, and thereby hangs a tale.) A Chinese servant, a mad dog (also with a tail in both senses ~~xxxx~~ ~~xxxx~~), and a canary completed the male section.

The female department consisted of a Russian family of Jewish descent, a somewhat mysterious young refugee from Siberia (also with a tale), and myself - with a very long tale to tell. In fact, we were a tell-tale lot ~~xxxxxxx~~, which, of course, made it all the more interesting.

The Russians had their meals on their own, as they preferred their kind of food and cooking. I graced the table of the male section with my presence and made my appearance in their community only at those sociable hours till they moved into their new spacious quarters. Then I became a fully-fledged boarder. Anyhow, this initiative entry was a great relief to the solitary meals on small-shot and leather bread of recent date.

The only creature who resented my promotion was the mad dog. (There were several of these vicious beasts running loose in Harbin.) Whenever I entered the premises I risked succumbing to hydrophobia. The brute always made a dash for my legs, which I saved by dexterously parrying his attacks with my umbrella. His end was tragic, but well deserved. A Chinaman was paid to keep him chained up miles out of the town. He broke his bonds - returned to his former haunts - was coldly received - dragged back to his distant fetters, and finally shot for incorrigible misbehaviour and criminal tendencies. - "SOME dog!", pithily commented the Y.M.C.A. - "An appropriate epitaph!", rejoined I.

When this drama was enacted, the old site of the Y.M.C.A. was closed (probably in token of mourning for the brute), and we all trundled our belongings in every sort of conveyance we could lay hold of to the fine new building nearer the American Consulate. This building was still undergoing construction, and a lively time we had of it in consequence. Battering-rams were in full swing all day, accompanied by the yells of the Chinese masons. When we sallied forth from our rooms, we were either lassoed by ropes dangling from nowhere; or else we took a header into space where a staircase ought to have been; or if there happened to be one, over the precipitous sides where banisters ought to have appeared.

But the worst of all these lively distractions was the steadily invading army of "B Flats" (polite musical term for bugs) recruited from the Chinese section of the building. I was first made aware of this in-

vasion by the murderous screams of my next-door neighbour, the mysterious visitor from Siberia. She had been absent for a few days, and now found a warm and hearty welcome awaiting her. I flew to her rescue. There she was in evening gown, standing like a shipwrecked mariner among the billowy folds of sheets, blankets, and pillows strewn in all directions. Her wild shrieks, frantic gestures, and rabid assaults with the shoe in her hand, breathed wholesale slaughter. I dashed for the Keating's powder.

When the storm had abated, I tried to calm her ruffled nerves by assuring her that the powder was not at all to the taste of either Russian, or Chinese "B Flats", till she reluctantly consented to lie on the floor and taboo the mattress for that night.

Alack, before long I saw the vanguard of the invaders triumphantly enter my sanctorum. A crusade was then initiated by the ~~eccentric~~ knights of the Y.M.C.A. to exterminate the pest before it exterminated us.

A more entertaining event than this internecine war ~~now took place~~ - namely <sup>was</sup> the wedding of the young Czech poet to a little Siberian girl. None of us was supposed to know anything about it. But I surreptitiously slipped into the church at the crucial moment and witnessed their plighted <sup>th.</sup> tro

The Russian marriage service - like all Greek ritual - is far more ceremonious than the Catholic rite. At a certain point massive crowns are held over the heads of the bride and bridegroom - a symbol of their authority in their future family life (a symbol not much in harmony with modern ideas, I trow!) Strange to say, three or four weddings were being celebrated one after the other in that church that day. So there was plenty of animation.

The reception of the bridal pair at the Y.M.C.A. was according to the western, orthodox tradition, namely, rice and an old shoe dangling on the nuptial door-handle. Never was there a more lovesick bridegroom. During his English lessons ~~with me~~ I saw he was in a "brown study", thinking of his little bride next door, instead of the grammar rule I was explaining (and no wonder!) Suddenly he would burst out in his broken English - "Just one (leettle) kiss" - and disappear. He certainly did not make much progress in mending his English during that fortnight of honeymooning.

My other pupils were Russians, and most interesting our lessons were. Here is a sample of their translations for correction to which they treated me:-

The Album by Chehoff(Translation "sic" from  
the Russian.)

The titled councillor Krateroff, thin and ill, as became an admiral's rank, stepped ahead and turning himself to Gmichoff said: "Your Excellency! My heart is moved and touched with your many years' command and your fatherly care. More than during the whole ten years", prompted Sakoosin, "we your subordinates, at this significant for us day, offer your Excellency as a mark of our respect and deep gratitude this album with our portraits and trust that during the continuation of your significant life, you will remain with us until your death." - "By your fatherly instructions in the way of truth and progress," added Sakoosin, wiping from his forehead tiny drops of perspiration; evidently, he wanted very much to speak, and evidently had prepared a speech. - "Yes, and will be scattered", finished he, "your ties for still a long time on the field of genius, labour and public selfconsciousness!" On the left wrinkled cheek of Gmichoff fell a tear. - "Gentlemen!", said he with trembling voice, "I did not expect and by no means thought that you would celebrate my modest jubilee. I am touched... even very. I will not forget this minute till my grave, believe me...believe me, my friends, that no one wishes you such goodness as I. And if even it was something then for your benefit..." Gmichoff, Civil States Councillor kissed titled councillor Krateroff, who did not expect this honor and turned pale from ecstasy. Afterwards the Superintendent made signs with his hand indicating that he could not speak from emotion, and cried as if he had not received a costly album, but on the contrary, that it had been taken away from him. After having recovered himself a little and said a few more touching words he gave his hand to everybody to shake and with loud joyful cheers went downstairs, got into the carriage and accompanied with blessings drove off. Sitting in the carriage he felt in his heart a mire of joyful feeling unknown till this time and cried once more. At home a new joy awaited him. There his family, friends and acquaintances had arranged him such an ovation that it seemed that if he had not been in the world, then, perhaps it would have been very bad for his country. The jubilee dinner consisted of toasts speeches, embraces, and tears. - "Gentlemen!", said he before dessert, "two hours before I was gratified for all those sufferings, which a man had to go through, who serves so to speak, not to form, nor litter, but to a duty. And to day I have received the highest reward. My subordinates have given me an album. There! I am touched." The holiday faces bent over the album and commenced to examine it.

(The corrector required a certain stretch of imagination, don't you think? Poor Chehoff!)

One day I had an interview with two aspirants to the English language of a very different species, namely, two Chinese ladies. The interview was somewhat <sup>disconcerting</sup> ~~top-sided~~; for in answer to all my comments and queries, they simply sat mum and smiled - smiled - smiled. Methought, they'll be desperately hard pupils to teach, if this is their way of responding to my efforts! Luckily for me, they let their aspirations for English stop at that smile; for they never appeared again. Afterwards I was confidentially told that they were the so-called wives of a wealthy Chinaman who feared he had offended his gods, because his first wife had presented him with no son. (I wonder if he thought, poor soul, that the god of languages would be more propitious towards him?)

## Record XVIII

The summer of 1920 was now well advanced. I bethought myself of that further glimpse of China to which I wished to treat myself before return-

ing to western civilization. My great desire was to see <sup>(now called Peiping)</sup> Peking - regarded as one of the wonders of the universe, and rightly so. Never will I forget my departure from the friendly Y.M.C.A. I went off in grand style, enthroned on my luggage in one of their lorries (and occasionally disappearing when an extra<sup>deep</sup> rut came along) which went rattling down the bumpy road to the refrain of "For she's a jolly good fellow", and the waving of handkerchiefs. At the station the scene assumed a somewhat more dignified air. I sailed out sedately in company with the afore-mentioned gentlemanly Russian ex-officer, whose destination lay in the same direction.

This section of the famous Manchurian Railway was a curiously twisted tag-end. One wriggled out of Chinese territory into Japanese, and then somehow suddenly wriggled back again into China. We passed through Mukden and Chang-chung and I don't remember what other "Chungs" before we finally reached Peking. (The train only "skirted" these towns and left no time for inspection.) As far as scenery went, it all seemed fairly uniform and uninteresting, except when a distant pagoda or coffin broke the monotonous sameness of the general outlook. The Chinese bury their dead in a sitting, or standing (I don't know which) posture, and often leave the coffin erect above the ground - a gruesome reminder of the vanity of life! Otherwise, they enclose them within the precincts of their homes for ancestor worship.

Anyone who has visited Peking will remember it as the city of walls. You alight at the station outside the city walls. All the streets are walled, except where the shops are, and only behind these walls does the Pekinese build his little home. This lends a dreary aspect altogether and makes one feel one would like to see over these walls into the picturesque houses - mostly built of bamboo and some kind of very strong paper, and intersected with charming courtyards and gardens. These mud walls and narrow mud lanes give this most fascinating city a slummy look.

The European Quarter - where all the Embassies, Legations, and Banks are - is built in western style and well fortified since the Boxer Outbreak. The British Embassy was particularly imposing. The residential section - unlike the other I lived in - is all Chinese, except for the magnificent Rockefeller Institute and an odd house here and there. Other western buildings, however, have been erected since then.

I stayed, as usual, with some American Society (I forget the name), and was delighted to find myself in a real Chinese house made of bamboo and

strong brown paper. This paper keeps the cold out even in midwinter, which can be severe in Peking. But woe betide, if a crack or rent occurs when a snow or dust storm is blowing! The access to each room in these Chinese houses is from the court. There is no intercommunication. The effect is charming, but not practical, especially in bad weather. (Once when visiting my next-door neighbour, I forgot I was living in a paper house, and knocked at their door. The door responded so generously my hand went right through.)

And now for the sight-seeing. Three wonders stand out - The Forbidden City, the Temple of Heaven, and the Observatory with its beautiful astronomical instruments. The Forbidden City was called thus, because the public was forbidden to enter it under the Imperial Regime. Only the Emperor, his suite, and high officials lived there. Since China became a Republic, everybody may visit it, except one part inhabited by the heir to the throne—(now King of Manchukuo.)

The whole place consisted of palaces and works of art. Some of these palaces have been transformed into museums containing ancient treasures of such marvellous workmanship. It would take years to examine each object with the aid of a magnifying-glass - so minute is the carving. The Chinese, one says, have lost their creative genius, and have only retained an extraordinary imitative ability. They have also lost the secret of the wonderful colouring of the tiles which adorn these palaces, and which have kept all their brilliancy throughout the centuries.

The Temple of Heaven was a thing of beauty. (To know all the details of it and the religious rites performed there, one need only look up the guide-book.) It stands on the outskirts of the city, hidden away among groves and fields - a peaceful setting in perfect harmony with its own serene loveliness. Nobody is supposed to take away any relic from those sacred precincts. But I could not resist the temptation of going to the assistance of a little flower made of blue tile tottering on the top of a wall and helping it down.

The surroundings of the Observatory were the opposite extreme of the Temple. One had to hunt it up in the slums. But once you were perched on its summit, the exquisite carving of the ubiquitous dragon on the astronomical instruments, and a fine general panorama of Peking gladdened your eyes. It really WAS a relief to get a wholesale view of what was on the other side of all those interminable walls! This Observatory—(the oldest

of its kind in the world) was founded by the Mongol Emperor in 1279, and directed for over a century by the Jesuits in whose charge it remained until the middle of the eighteenth century. It will now cease to function as an Observatory and will continue only as a museum.

The next <sup>side</sup>sight to see - a modern one this time - was the Rockefeller Institute. It is built in the centre of the residential quarter - so central, ~~in fact,~~ that every time you jump into a rickshaw the coolie inevitably lands you there. If you explicitly told him not to and gave him some other address, he would look at you as if you were not quite all <sup>right.</sup>

Another indication to the coolie of your mental derangement was, if you expressed your wish to walk sometimes, instead of being dragged along in his rickshaw. Hardly did one set foot on the roads, when raucous cries would greet one on all sides and a dozen rickshaws would tear up from nowhere and everywhere and "yellingly" invite one in. (For the coolie makes part of his rickshaw.) I certainly did appreciate this little eastern vehicle altogether, though I did not quite like a human being taking the place of an animal. However, it meant livelihood for these poor creatures. If only we Whites WOULD always treat them as human beings and not as animals! Only the missionaries seemed to deal with them humanely.

Well, let the coolie have his way this time and land us at the Rockefeller Institute. It really was a magnificent building and showed the good taste (according to my humble opinion) of imitating the picturesque Chinese architecture exteriorly, and of being equipped up-to-date interiorly. Since my time it has been fully completed and has proved a great boon to the Chinese, which it was meant to be.

My week's sightseeing trip was up now and I was bound to go to Shanghai. Alas, there was a famine on - (a chronic condition in China) - somewhere in the neighbourhood. Consequently, one's enjoyment was much marred by the continual begging and the sights one saw down the railway line. At one station the ~~crowd~~ of starving beggars were stretching out their skeleton arms in between the railings for help. A little American boy travelling in the next carriage threw some coins and thoroughly enjoyed the ensuing scuffle - not realising, of course, the sufferings of those victims. One poor old hag was fighting with a boy for a coin and literally bit his hand to get hold of it. - "What a funny lady!", exclaimed the little American, looking up gleefully.

The one interesting place one passes from Pekin to Shanghai is Nan-kin; but without actually going through it, Pagodas, coffins, rice-fields, occasional villages with sometimes a Christian Mission-house and chapel, were the only other objects I remember seeing on that trip.

The first sounds audible on arriving at Shanghai were the monotonous, <sup>crooning</sup> broken ~~cries~~ coming from the wharves ~~coming from the wharves~~, where thousands of coolies were at work. A Chinaman never can do anything without singing, if one <sup>can</sup> call those weird, raucous sounds "singing". Suppose two coolies are carrying a stone, a brick, a plank, no matter what; the one in front will jerk out "hung", and the one behind "hong" (pronounced as if one had a roofless mouth) throughout the livelong day. If he carries anything more elaborate, well, one wonders what internal woes could bring forth such painful wails and howls.

Only once did I hear a truly melodious wail wafted down the street in which I happened to be working. - "Ah, this must be a wedding or a funeral", thought I, and looked out of the window. Fancy what I saw! Fifty coolies serenading a drain-pipe they were dragging along the gutter!

My new haven was to be a convent-school in the section called the French Concession. (Both England and France have sections called "Concessions" in that city.) It was a boarding- and also a day-school, with one part reserved for odds-and-ends like myself. The other "ends" consisted of an American, a Portuguese, an Italian, a Russian, and three half-castes - all workers in some form or other. A Canadian non-boarder also used to appear whenever the spirit moved her, which was usually at meal time. They were all very friendly, and the Sisters were dears.

Regarding half-castes, by the way, ought they to exist at all? For they generally become out-castes as regards society. The children are the victims of the parents in this respect. Surely Eurasian marriages ought to be interdicted by law? They are unnatural and not desirable for the children's sake. The eastern blood always dominates in the latter, (especially physically), as well as the less pleasing traits.

Just opposite the convent was the Jesuit church for the Chinese. It was very gaudily decorated, so as to appeal to the oriental eye and mentality. As aforesaid, the Chinese never can do anything without the accompaniment of so-called "singing". Hence all the prayers were sung on two or three notes in the usual, monotonous, eastern style throughout the en-

tire service. You could hardly expect a crowd of Chinese to keep silent, could you? Well, it was the same thing at the Sisters' school for Chinese girls only, out at Si-ka-wei (a suburb of the city.) When I visited it, I found the girls singing out their lessons, *(each one in her own way)*, and the Sisters told me they simply could not get them to study quietly. These children were not allowed to become Christians except with their parents' consent - parental respect and authority being part of their religion, so to speak. They were very docile and made good pupils - due to their native esteem for all that pertains to learning and knowledge.

What a strange sight I witnessed that day in the chapel! At Benediction Service, these girls slowly walked in two by two, draped in flowing veils with dark baggy trousers showing underneath - a truly incongruous combination! The Chinaman's native costume is becoming, but not the woman's.

Among the Sisters teaching at that time, I noticed one was Chinese. The following is her romantic story:- Her family was Christian, and she wished to become a nun. But her parents wanted her to marry a young Christian Chinaman of their acquaintance. Being Chinese, her parents' wish was law and she dared not oppose it. Sorrowfully she was led to the altar on the fatal day. When it came to the critical moment of saying "yes", she suddenly felt she had obtained the courage to say "no", and boldly said so. The scandal (in the sense the Russians use the word) which ensued was great. But neither threats, nor maltreatment could subdue her, and she fled to the convent. She certainly looked very happy and content - as she deserved to be, brave woman!

Another good work those Sisters undertook in that vast building was to teach Chinese women and girls to make beautiful embroidery, and to save and rear poor, discarded Chinese infants. In the embroidery department one could see four generations of the same family working together - a real paradise for the majority of them, seeing from what squalor and misery the nuns had rescued them. As for the crèche, I happened to be there just when a ~~poor~~ Chinese mother was handing in her baby she wished to save - a daily occurrence, the Sisters said. Never did the Darwin theory impress itself so forcibly upon one, as at the sight of those infants! All the more admiration for the Sisters and their disinterested and humane work!

Opposite this establishment was the Jesuit school for Chinese boys,

run on the same lines, minus the infant-asylum. Different trades were taught them, and their workshops with their products were open to all visitors. Further down the road, isolated in the fields, stood the Carmelite convent. Missionaries, with their active life, are pleased to benefit ~~Then there was the famous Jesuit Observatory (but not open to us just that day.)~~ by the prayers of these contemplative Orders. ~~Altogether, Sik-ka-wei is~~ an interesting spot from the Catholic point of view.

Let us now return to the town proper, this time by electric tram, instead of by rickshaw; for Shanghai is an up-to-date city in this respect. In fact, it was somewhat too much up-to-date for those who like to "feel" ~~(so to say)~~ their exotic surroundings, ~~(barring the unpleasant ones.)~~ Had it not been for the police — Indians in the British Concession; Tonkinese in the French — the rickshaws, and the coolies with their incessant cries, one might have felt oneself in any big European or American city. The Chinese Quarter was quite separate. This was not the case in Peking. Consequently, Shanghai was less characteristic.

I had found a job ~~(to use that expressive, ugly, little word)~~ as typist and stenographer in an English office in the busy Nankin Road. Work in China, especially in the American firms, is well remunerated, there being less competition than in the West. The hours are limited to six daily, with the week-end off. The social life is also more democratic and freer, and there is always that so-called "fascination" of the East — which decidedly fascinated me ~~(minus the dirt and heat.)~~

I met kind friends there, (as one does everywhere.) The flighty Scotsman and my American girl friend from Harbin both turned up. But I soon realised that office work, ~~(except in the literary or musical line)~~, has no interest for me. Besides, infatuation for Peking was haunting me. It was a question of "love at first sight" with that enchanting city. I wanted to stay there the very first time I saw it. But there was no work to keep me staying at that time. So the next best thing was to go to Tientsin — only 3 hours by train from Peking — and run up whenever I got the chance.

No sooner thought than done. I was to live in the convent-school in Tientsin and the dear little Mother Superior already held out prospects of work for me.

#### Record XIX

My arrival at the station there was hailed with a big hullabaloo — not in my honour, forsooth, but in honour of a wedding or funeral which

was taking place. (One never could quite distinguish between the two in those outlandish regions.) It turned out to be the latter. The band was playing, squibs and shots were fired off - noise enough to resuscitate any corpse! In the midst of all this exhilarating din, I and the Sisters who had come to meet me, rolled off in rickshaws to the convent.

Tientsin was Shanghai in miniature. It also had its British, French, and even Italian Concessions. The latter was extensively and well laid out. Those broad "viali" (avenues) with Italian names and the Italian flag flying everywhere brought back a whiff of "Roma Eterna" *do me.*

I now started life afresh by giving a few private lessons. My first pupil was a very pretty girl - a refugee from Moscow, with English, Italian, Russian, and Armenian blood in her veins. Later on, when in New York, I succeeded in getting her over there too - at her express wish.

First she stayed with an aunt ~~there~~ - went in ~~xxxxx~~ for sewing, then for sticking envelopes in a doctor's office, then landed in a lunatic-asylum, where she tended the patients who requited <sup>her</sup> in such a forcible way she had to flee. Her last recourse was the hospital. Here she finally settled down and became a trained nurse.

Another pupil was an ex-Cossack General. He and his wife and two little girls all took lessons at one and the same time. The Russian has such a passionate love of study, he will give his last "kopek" (farthing) for a lesson and then go without his supper. Like my Russian friends with whom I lived in Harbin - (the ex-Governor and his aristocratic wife) - this Cossack General also emigrated to Australia and New Zealand later on with a few of his Cossacks soldiers to try their luck at farming. The

A Russian lady - a doctor's wife - was the next on my programme. Through her I discovered that the brother of the lady I had lived with in Moscow was a refugee with his family a few houses further away. Delighted to hear this, I went straight off to see them. Thus I was able to get into communication with my Moscow family again. They had escaped first to the Crimea, then to Constantinople, then to England and Germany, and finally to France. This contact with Russian refugees made me feel more at home in my daily life. Besides, ~~was~~ <sup>one</sup> that dear young Mother Superior ~~who~~ was kindness itself. But ~~xx~~ could not speak so highly of the food meted out ~~xxxxx~~, nor of the very disagreeable young Chinaman who, unfortunately, was charged with the housework.

When a Chinaman means to be nasty, he succeeds admirably. This youngster had so got the upper hand, he reigned supreme in his domain and would hardly obey even the "reverend Mother". There was an old-fashioned stove in my bedroom, which he never let out throughout the winter. To keep the coal alive during the night, he used to pile ashes on the top and let it simmer, so to say. Woe betide if one touched it! Inadvertently I did so one night - consequently, a roaring fire blazed up - blazed the whole stove into an incandescent furnace and evidently meant to blaze the whole place into a ruddy glow. All this just beside my pillow too! I saw everything "in red", and according to me, the house was already on fire. Up I jumped and groped my way to a Sister's room. She, poor dear, had to go out and persuade that amiable Chinese boy (whom I knew I could not) to come and extinguish the imminent conflagration - which he reluctantly did, sweet creature.

Naturally there was the Chinese Quarter in Tientsin just as in Harbin and in Shanghai. This native <sup>Q</sup>uarter alone ~~(as in these two latter towns)~~ reminded one of being in China.

During all this time I had been trying to find a billet in Peking - my cherished goal. I went up for a few days - had a shot at the Rockefeller Institute - and then tried to find something permanent elsewhere in the city. Never will I forget the ~~jaunt in a~~ rickshaw <sup>jaunt</sup> I took one day. Having made a list of British firms and got somebody to explain to my coolie where to go, off I jerked on my new adventure.

I was soon engulfed in the depths of the slums teeming with Chinese only, selling and buying their wares at the interminable rows of wooden booths which lined the narrow mud path on either side. My rickshaw was also soon engulfed in the mud; but the coolie always managed to hoist it out again - with me still inside - by a dexterous twist and pull. Oh, the smell of those eating-booths and the din of those yells! It was all so strange and exotic I began to wonder if I were really myself, or pretending to be in a book? A still more pungent whiff and an extra lively bump answered that question... Thank heaven, there was the Union Jack fluttering over a British firm in the distance! I was saved.

*Record XXI* Peking is one of the safest cities on earth to live in. Not because the Pekinese are more honest; but simply because they fear the police and

what the police can do. Why, I've walked through those slums at midnight with a girl friend, and no one dreamt of molesting us. (Very different from some other cities in Europe!) As for locks and keys in doors, very few, if any, are ever visible. In any case, they would be rather difficult to fix, seeing even a gentle rap leaves its imprint.

The next venture I went in for was to try and eat with chop-sticks in a Chinese restaurant. But it fared no better than the jaunting-rickshaw-expedition. In fact, it was worse as regards practical results. All those little Chinese dishes I was fencing with landed everywhere but in the right place. I ~~really~~ was not sorry; for one never knew of what those xxxxxxxx messes consisted. Whereas, when <sup>you</sup> got back and landed things in the right direction with fork and spoon, <sup>you</sup> DID know.

Having convinced myself there was "nothing doing" (~~as the Americans say~~), I returned to Tientsin. Fortune favoured me better here for the moment. Through the father of my pretty pupil of "divers nationalities" I obtained the position of translator and typist in a well-known French engineering firm. Following the French custom, the work hours were seven instead of six a day, and no week-end off. When I demurred, the little Frenchy said - "Que voulez-vous! C'est notre habitude!" (It can't be helped, it's our custom!) - "A rotten custom", I commented, "Needs reforming"; Those poor Chinese clerks were made to work even on Sundays (just like machines) - an exploitation of labour they dared not even mention *to me*.

Anyhow, I was very glad to get the billet, though I warned them I knew nothing about technical engineering terms. - "N'importe; vous aurez des dictionnaires pour vous aider" (No matter; you'll have dictionaries to help you.) The consequence was I found myself describing a French engine as being "consumptive" (in French), instead of applying the word "consumption", and also creating monstrosities of terms by looking up the different components and then sticking them piecemeal together (this referred particularly to the German technical terms.) However, they were clever enough to understand my new terminology, and even contemplated promoting me to the filing department as well.

Whilst awaiting this honour, I got news from a friend in Pekin that my chance had at last come. A position of typist and filest was vacant at the British Legation. At the same time, a cablegram from my sister in New York arrived, inviting me to join her out there. I was sorry

these two offers collided. Pekin magnetized me. Still, I felt it wiser, perhaps, to go to New York. So I resisted the "call of the East", announced my decision to the French Firm—(after ~~planning~~ <sup>initiating</sup> a poor struggling Russian refugee into my place to continue my monstrous translations of "consumptive" engines, etc.)—and took my departure for Shanghai again.

However, I could not leave China without saying goodbye to Pekin first. So I got the engine to kindly drive me there. The train was so crowded I had to take refuge in the dining-car. Whilst sitting there, whom do I see <sup>enter</sup> ~~come in~~ but my young Czech poet and his little Siberian bride! <sup>(whom I had met in Harbin)</sup> Our mutual effusion of pleasure and surprise was so great the poet cordially kissed my hand in the gallant Slav fashion, and the bride and myself fell into each other's arms.

This performance over, they explained they were on their honeymoon to Pekin, after having saved up for it for six months. They told me all the latest gossip of Harbin - that, thanks to the help of the Y.M.C.A., he was taking his little bride to his family in "Praha" (the Czech for our "Prague"). But as they had not yet had any "real" honeymoon, they thought they had better begin it in Pekin. - "Will you join us?", they naively asked. - "Delighted!", rejoined I.

In high spirits at our lucky encounter and anticipating the fun we were in for, we felt like three truants on the spree when we alighted on the platform at Pekin. Hotels not being in our favour, I proposed putting up at a hostel, where a good soul took in stray wanderers like ourselves. She turned out to be a missionary "on her own" - welcomed us into her sanctuary - insisted on offering up prayers for Russia (to the poet's great consternation) - remarked what a nice skin nature had bestowed on him - and that we must all be ultra punctual for meals (another shock to the poet.) In fact, it required bumpy rickshaw-rides, the wonders of the Forbidden City, and the beauty of the Temple of Heaven to restore his mental equilibrium.

As a preliminary item in our sightseeing fling, I suggested an expedition of discovery for the whereabouts of my ex-pupil - the Czech Major. The poet had told me he had succumbed to the wiles of his enemies who had ruined his career when he was about to realise his most cherished ambitions. We felt sorry for him in his downfall (though he little deserved it from us), and for that very reason, I suppose, each of us jumped

into a rickshaw and proceeded tandem-wise to the French Legation. ~~xxxxx~~  
~~xxxxxxx~~ With the usual French compliments and politeness, the secret of the mysterious whereabouts was revealed to us and to our coolies.

So we threaded our way through the maze of slums surrounding the famous Observatory. By dint of battering-rams in the shape of sticks, umbrellas, and fists applied to the external bulwarks with which every Chinese house is fortified, plus the reinforcement of yells from the coolies, we finally located the Major's abode. There he was enthroned at his writing-desk, as usual, and surrounded by his rows of pet Chinese idols. He welcomed us with genuine surprise and pleasure. Evidently he felt his loneliness; for after a friendly chat he accompanied us back and gladly accepted our invitation to join us in our sightseeing expedition.

How we did enjoy this! Peking is surely one of the Seven Wonders of the Universe! Among the already mentioned marvels, we visited an ancient temple exquisitely set among hoary, majestic trees and silent groves - all too beautiful for what it enshrined. What it DID enshrine was a lot of dirt, odours, hideous idols, a certain amount of pagan myth and tradition, plus a few "monks" reciting their prayers.

Well, we wound up our honeymooning spree with a nocturnal visit to the Chinese Quarter. The Major offered to chaperone us there, as <sup>we</sup> did not know exactly what we might be in for. So behold us four gliding along in our rickshaws, with a full moon beaming at us from above and a seething vortex of humanity yelling at us from below. Then again did that feeling of unreality come over one - so strange and weird were the sights, and so exotic the whole atmosphere!

The narrow, teeming thoroughfares of booths illuminated with lanterns and bedizened with tinsel and the usual gaudy eastern ensigns; the shrill cries of the vendors and the coolies; and the strangest <sup>sight</sup> of all - an occasional motorcar, out of which stepped Chinese women who, by their festive attire, seemed to step out of bygone aeons as well. Their headdress consisted of structures resembling miniature ships, or some such fantastic concoction. How did they contrive to get in and out of a motorcar with that scaffolding on their heads? The rest of their apparel was composed of the truly handsome Chinese silk and brocade - be it though in the form of trousers and jacket.

Our goal in all this medley was the theatre. There was a variety of

shows for every taste in this building. In one room a drama; in the next a cinema; in another a ballet, and so on. When you had enough of one, you just sauntered through the next door. We started with the drama department.

The plot was not intricate. As far as we could make out, it consisted of a Chinaman lying in bed and another Chinaman lying underneath, giving violent punches to the mattress, to the terror of the Chinaman lying upon it. At every upheaval the latter jumped up and searched the premises - everywhere, of course, except under the bed. This performance was renewed several times with reinforcements from sympathetic neighbours who joined in the general hunt everywhere - EXCEPT under the bed. The climax of suspense and excitement reached snapping point in the audience, when luckily someone DID think of looking under the bed and dragging forth the cause of all the woe, to meet his well deserved doom. Thus the tragedy ended amid thunderous applause and sighs of intense relief.

To becalm our nerves, we now sauntered into the ballet-room. Chinese women are not supposed to perform in public; so the two "ballerines" were boys. Very graceful they were too, waving about their feathery "pompons" to the rhythm of music. The only drawback was the monotony of it all. The music consisted of an instrument of one or two strings and two or three notes reiterated ad infinitum. This monotonous strain, however, was every now and then broken by a damp hot towel hurled at your head, or at the person's for whom it was intended. (a diversion we much appreciated, as long as "our" heads <sup>was</sup> ~~were~~ not the <sup>target,</sup> ~~receiver.~~)

It was a custom in China to serve up clean towels soaked in boiling water, with which to cleanse and refresh one's face and hands, both in trains and in places of entertainment. As the latter were generally crowded (the men seated on one side, and the women on the other) the attendants often found it difficult to reach their goal. Hence the need for dodging flying towels with the consequent diverting results.

This particular towel-shot acted as a decisive "Finale" for us to the 99th. repetition of the above ballet-refrain. So we sought another diversion in the adjoining cinema-hall. The films all hailed from the West, and were so appreciated by the Chinese audience, that the clapping was continuous and even drowned the singing of the performers in the interludes - a Chinese way of showing hearty approval.

With the clapping still ringing in our ears and the moon still beaming

at us from above, we rickshawed back to our respective "dens" and took a cordial farewell of the Major. Thus ended that unforgettable "Chinese-Arabian" night.

The next day I bid godspeed to my young bridal couple and returned to Shanghai to embark for New York. I corresponded with them for some years after and was pleased to hear their happiness begun in Harbin still continued in Prague. But the poet's English did not seem to make the same progress as his domestic felicity. I revelled in getting tit-bits of correspondence as the following:-

(sic) "I am always literary working and it is, perhaps, why I have a little supplique to you. I will write in Chek some short literary or culturally essay about Prague or our cultural life here - and I will send you this essay. If you want have the kindness to find out in Chicago a czechoslovak newspaper or review - and give them my essay - shall that be the best service for us by you. You say - I have here, at Prague not any information about the situation in America. But my countrymen have a large interest for ~~for~~ our life here. And for them shall be a direct correspondence from Prague a very fine think. You go in a czech redaction. They will read my essay and - I suppose - they will find it very, very good - and after the printing they will send me a honorary in  $\text{}$ . You must known, our value is now  $\text{}1 = 98$  Krons, it is a large difference? What think you about? For my home is some money not without signification. That will be only on times. After this 1 time, I will be in direct relations with the redaction. Or shall I whrite somethings german or english - and will you made the traduction or correct me my article - and can you made for me that a american review printed my essays about the cultural life here in Europe? You will give me a sincerelly answer, is it not so? And you excuse me, that I am interrupting you in yours obligations?"

Another tit-bit of broken English once sent me by another Czech pupil for missing his lesson ran thus:- "As I am going to take bath this evening I beg you excuse me for to day's lesson and ask very humbly come tomorrow!"

#### Record XX

The convent-hostel at Shanghai and my friends there welcomed me back as if I had never left them. A few days sufficed to see me finally embark on my long voyage across the Pacific Ocean.

My last night in China was a typical set-off for my departure. There was to be a total eclipse of the moon, and the Chinese had well prepared themselves for the forthcoming drama. As the shadows gradually veiled the light, yells, squibs, bombs, etc., rent the air. The din reached its height when the moon became invisible. Then there was a lull; for had not the dragon swallowed the moon in spite of all their efforts to frighten him away and rescue her? (If she reappeared again, this simply meant the dragon had spat her out as something indigestible, I presume.)

The ship was of the Empress Canadian Line. A fine one too! I found myself berthed in what might be called a family-cabin with four other lady

passengers. A nice Scotch mission lady ~~who mothered us all~~, a giddy young married American woman, a Chinese girl ~~who~~ brought up by Protestant missionaries, a Russian woman, and myself formed the quintet. Being so many, we all decided we were passionately fond of fresh air and would not close the porthole-window, no matter what the temperature or the ocean might be doing outside. Fresh air it certainly was, as a thin coating of ice on anything damp in the cabin proved in the early mornings. However, we all enjoyed it, except the little Russian, who rolled herself up like a chrysalis in her berth, barely allowing her nose to peep out for an occasional inhalation.

Later on she moved into another cabin with a Japanese family, who went in for the opposite extreme and NEVER opened their porthole window. - "I'd give 50 yen to return to your cabin", she declared to us in her disgust. She was so diminutive in size, that to reach the water-jug, or her upper berth, she invariably went through a series of spasmodic jumps, till the tall motherly Scotch lady came to her help by hoisting her up to <sup>her goal</sup> whatever she wished to attain.)

The giddy young American was the best sailor of all. Nothing seemed to upset her - not even the tag-end of the typhoon we were caught in off the coast of Japan. Never having experienced the delights of seasickness, she seemed unable to sympathise with the victims thereof and would gaily trip into the cabin any hour of the night - turn on all the lights, and with a cheery - "Well girls, how are you all?", proceed with her lengthy toilet, whilst we lay moaning and groaning with deep internal woes. Anyhow, she struck a gay note, though it was in her own way.

I was the disgrace of the whole quintet; for I spent nearly all those interminable three weeks in my berth ~~(too weak to get up)~~, diverting my mind by trying to breathe in rhythmic cadence with the down-and-upheavals <sup>movements</sup> of the ship ~~(a preventive measure against seasickness, I was told.)~~ Another pastime lay in counting off the weary hours and looking forward to so many days less torture. But what was my horror ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~, when, having crawled through a Wednesday and calculated the next day as Thursday, I was told it was to be Wednesday all over again ~~(due to our having just crossed the 180th meridian)~~!

And oh, that aggressive, unwelcome call - "Ha' pa' seven!" of that Chinese boy at the cabin door every morning! As if anyone wanted to eat

with the ship upside down, and our insides too, for the matter of that!

The first port we touched at was Nagasaki - one of the most picturesque I have ever seen. The very fact of it being Japan with its dolly houses, flowery kimonos, fans, and cherry blossom - everything, in fact, as one sees in pictures and on lacquer-boxes, enhanced the vision of it in one's mind's eye. Sure enough, Nagasaki was all this, barring the European Quarter. The women were overpainted, diminutive in stature, and top-heavy (this latter defect accentuated by their exaggerated headdress.) But their quaint costume made them more attractive than the Chinese women in trousers and jacket, even though these latter <sup>females</sup> were better proportioned. The Chinese men, especially the Manchurians, on the contrary, were far taller than the Japanese, and had the good sense to cling to their national dress, instead of imitating the Europeans, as the Japs do.

Nature often bestows small hands and feet on Chinamen of the wealthy class - a result, probably, of the ancient custom (still practised by the fair sex) of bandaging the feet from babyhood, and of using both feet and hands as little as possible. I remember seeing a woman in Tientsin toddling along on her microscopic feet with outstretched arms, so as to maintain some sort of equilibrium to her tottering gait.

As for the Japanese men, they all appeared to smile, and the women all giggled at us - a mark of good breeding, I was told. For, all their feelings, whatsoever they may be, must be expressed in that way. (Pleasant enough to look at, but surely not very <sup>reassuring</sup> reliable!) "Never trust a Jap", warns the white trader; "But it's possible to trust a Chinese." This universal smiling reached its acme of politeness when Japs met. - "They stand on their heads for half an hour", my original American Vice-consul friend used impolitely to remark, (referring to their kow-towing.) And, sure enough, it was most amusing watching this performance at some of the stations.

The following anecdote is related as authentic in a book on Japanese customs:- A Japanese maid once asked her mistress, an Englishwoman, permission to attend her sick husband. On her return, the mistress tactfully enquired as to the husband's health. - "Here is my husband," smilingly answered the maid, producing an urn containing his cremated ashes!

Hardly did we touch "terra ferma" than I was my normal self again and

enjoyed a long walk around Nagasaki with two of my cabin mates. We passed a Catholic Mission Church where service was being held, and entered. Prayers were being recited in Japanese by young men on one side and young girls on the other. The latter wore white veils down to the ground and seemed to be squatting on the floor - Japanese-fashion, and also, in this case, "douche-like-fashion". ~~Xxxxxxxx~~ (How do Japanese women ever manage to sit down at all, seeing how tightly swathed their skirt is round their body?)

Just outside this Mission Chapel was a Japanese temple with a priest beating a tomtom. It was strange to see the pagan and the Christian faiths in such close touch. When the Catholic missionaries were allowed to reenter the country after 300 years' prohibition, they found there a certain number of Catholic Christians who had retained the Faith handed down to them through successive generations during all those <sup>centuries</sup> years. A truly marvellous proof of heroic constancy and fidelity!

Our ship was now heading for the Inland Seas. Many of the passengers made this trip by train through the interior of the country and joined us again at Yokohama. We would loved to have done this also and thus obtained a glimpse of the true Japan. But it meant more expense. However, sailing through the Inland Seas was also very delightful. I always redeemed my reputation when the sea was calm, which was the case in that protected part of the ocean. The event had <sup>to</sup> be celebrated by giving a concert of Russian music. So out came my Russian gypsy and Siberian convicts' songs, and out came a young Russian (a co-passenger favoured with a nice voice) to sing them, as only a Russian can, whilst I accompanied. The public was genuinely entertained.

Our next halting place was Kobe. The town itself looked unpardonably unattractive, seeing it was entirely western in build - at least along the seashore - and ugly at that too. So let's pass on to Yokohama, our third and last stop in Japan. When nearing this important seaport, we were treated to a fine view of lovely Fujiyama with her snow-capped peak.

Two trips were now available during our two days' stay at Yokohama: - one to some famous shrine near Holy Fujiyama; ~~and~~ the other to Tokio. Of course we wanted to take both; but decided for Tokio, it being the capital. So off we went - the Scotch lady, another very nice fellow-passenger (a Canadian Protestant missionary) and myself. But here again the city

proved very disappointing; for it was but a replica of the West. Only by dint of burrowing into some by-lanes did we remember we were in Japan. If only the Japs were more conservative in this respect, and, like the Chinese, would cling to their national costume, buildings, and traditions, instead of aping our western civilisation in every way! Here are some words written by a well-known traveller, which echo one's feelings on this point to a "T":- "Why hunger for universal uniformity? Why banish the picturesque, national and historic dress? What a monotonous world we should make it! Why merge into ONE GREY PROLETARIAN HOMOGENEITY?" (This last phrase is particularly applicable to Communism.) Surely it is possible to reform and progress without doing away with ALL national tradition and characteristics ~~as~~ those dear Bolsheviks are doing with poor Russia? Where will the interest lie in seeing different countries and nations, once the whole world has "merged into one grey proletarian homogeneity"?

And - "What is the use of paying if we don't get our money's worth?", ejaculated our very Scotch friend, after we had been debarred from entering two Japanese temples and advised to try a third one. With this typical remark we jumped into an electric tramcar and vaguely made for the "third one", each secretly hoping (but too polite to express it) that the practical suggestion of returning direct to Yokohama would be made. Evidently the current of telepathy became too strong and I suddenly burst out with the proposal - to the intense relief of all three of us.

We now started on our long "non-stop-flight" across the Pacific for Canada. "Pacific" indeed! Who ever had such an elastic imagination to stretch thus far and call it "pacific"? The tension would have snapped and blown it away in all those typhoons, gales, and tossings our gallant ship underwent so valiantly! And what can I say for my own behaviour, except that I was the disgrace of the whole ship, minus an emigrant family of papa, mamma, and three children.

As soon as they had boarded, they dived into their Class III cabin, lay prone on their bunks - boots, hats, and all - determined to be as miserable as possible and not budge for the next three days. The steward begged someone to come to the rescue. So the kind Scotch lady went over and enticed the youngest <sup>child</sup> one out of her coma. By the time we reached Canada the rest of the family had followed suit.

As the latter part of the voyage became more pacific, I was hoisted on to a deck-chair and smothered in rugs, ~~for~~ for everybody who passed me seemed to think I required one more. ~~xxxx~~ Why do stewards always offer you beeftea when you are in that languishing condition and when the very sight of food makes you squirm? What DID do me good, ~~xxxx~~ was the sight of a wild dance performed by as wild a dancer. She was a Russian artist on her way to New York. Anybody who happened to come within the range of her alarming antics was whisked off their feet into a frenzied vortex. Sure enough, if she didn't manage to whisk me off too, in spite of deck-chair and a mountain of rugs! Nothing like distraction of mind and laughter ~~for~~ genuine chuckling, if too weak for anything more audible ~~to~~ to cure seasickness.

But the most radical cure of all is dear old Mother Earth. How welcome was the sight of peaceful little Victoria ~~(more English than England)~~ in the early dawn, with only the seagulls quietly hovering above! Then the picturesque harbour of Vancouver hove in sight, and we all knew that our long and stormy passage across the so-called Pacific had, after all, come to a pacific end.

## Record XXI

- "Second Class ticket for New York, please." - "No Class II here, madam. Only one class in this country, with option of Tourist-car, if you like". So I installed myself in the Tourist-car with the motherly Scotch companion. This car was provided with an appendix in the shape of a kitchenette, should the inmates wish to do their own cooking. Strange to say, only the males took advantage of it. It was amusing to see how much more domesticated both Canadian and American men seemed to be in this respect than the European *compères*.

The five days run across Canada to New York was quite uneventful. The agitated "Pacific" had reduced me to such a state of physical prostration I was too weak to enjoy even the grandeur of the Rockies. These rugged peaks and gorges and the glimpse of some distant lake are the only bits of attractive scenery I remember along that Canadian-Pacific-Railway-Line.

Canada has been compared to Siberia. The vast plains covered with melting snow, and the endless monotonous railway track were reminiscent of it. Had we traversed the Line during the summer months of golden cornfields and flowers, we might have retained a different impression. Unlike Siberia, the railway lands you right in the place you are making for. In Siberia you generally have to take this for granted. The <sup>Liberian</sup> station says you have arrived. The town, or village says "Look for me and maybe you will find me some miles away". But whether hidden or visible, neither the towns nor the settlements along the Line shine for beauty, <sup>Perhaps</sup> except that in Siberia they may be more picturesque *than the outback settlements of Canada*.

At last we crossed the Canadian frontier and got into the pretty State of New York, and finally into New York City itself. The Grand Terminus Station is a typical spot to be dumped down in. It consists of a bewildering maze of criss-cross passages, steps, tunnels, crowds, speed, and noise. To help the distracted newcomer, black arrows have been painted along the ceiling, indicating the different directions <sup>to be</sup> followed. This means walking with upcast eyes - consequently, with fatal results to progress.

Of course my sister was there to avert impending disaster. I was borne away in triumph to the wee apartment she shared with friends in the Italian quarter of the city. This section is so teeming with Italian emigrants they call it "La Piccola Italia" (The Little Italy). It was delightful to

hear that musical language again spoken all around, but not that vile jargon most of the Italian children born and bred in New York speak and which they call English.

New York extends more in length than in breadth. It is the easiest metropolis in which to find one's way, for most of the streets have numbers instead of names. The skyscrapers impress one as being more fantastic, (especially when illuminated at night), than beautiful. More artistic shapes have been erected of late, I believe. But one would never call it a beautiful city. Minus the wealthy quarters, the greater part consists of ugly barrack-like houses and tenements adorned with fire-escapes running down the façades; pavements lined with garbage-tins and overrun with children on roller-skates; streets screeching with millions of motor vehicles; and the "el" and the "sub" expresses roaring above and below. Such is New York. At night the lavish illuminations somewhat tone down the sordidness of it all. It is a city that never sleeps. It is also a city that spells work, dollars, and din. And work I was determined to get (with the dollars thrown in.) The din was a perquisite to be accepted with good or bad grace.

The American branch of the Y.M.C.A. in Harbin had given me my first peep into Social Service Work. <sup>This work</sup> ~~It~~ appealed to me. So I applied to the Y.W.C.A. Secretaryship in their International Institute in the town of T.. was offered me in several months' time. Meanwhile, I accepted office work in the country in a large private finishing-school for wealthy girls. I was pleased to have this chance of seeing <sup>such</sup> an institution and started off forthwith.

Sure enough it was full of interest. The main building (formerly a hotel) was surrounded by cosy cottages for the teachers, spacious grounds, and pretty scenery. All sports were represented, including riding. There was even a miniature Greek theatre erected in the open for classic plays. Luxury was rampant. (Those millionaire girls would probably smile at this.) But what impressed one most was the psychological element which pervaded the whole school. The principal was an ultra refined woman. She evidently wished refinement to permeate the very atmosphere we inhaled.

Manners came first. Teachers and members of the staff were treated like royalty. At table never was a pupil to stand up or sit down before

the teacher did. And beware if she asked her superior to pass her anything! Should pupils meet their "Dons" in the passages, instantly they lined up and presented arms. (Wishing to forego these military honours, I used to turn tail and disappear round the corner whenever I saw any of these danger-signals about.)

Dainty means were taken to make the scholars feel they were not at "school", but in a pleasant, exclusive haven of learning. The sound of a vulgar bell must never offend their hearing. Sweet classical music, ~~softly~~ played by some music-lover, must gently greet their ears as they quietly descended the stairs for early morning prayers. Gongs producing "luscious", liquid notes, musically reminded them to subdue their voices at table, should they rise above the given standard. ~~The~~ gong, however, had no power to suppress the lyrical outbursts of song which spasmodically took place in moments of inspiration. ~~At~~ nighttime two or three preliminary so-called "winks" of the electric light warned them (instead of a bell) of the approaching total eclipse of the plant.

*Omit this paragraph if desirable.*

Such a state of affairs would have been incomprehensible to the Bolshevik mentality. Bolshevism simply advocates vulgar, bold insolence and degrading immorality, as far as the "dragging up" of their new youthful generation is concerned. Refinement and respect - except for their own godless laws - is an unknown quantity with them.

I most fully relished all these dainties and the refined spirit they created. Luxury alone was taboo. It is the source of many<sup>a</sup> vice, one knows. (This, coupled with the careless wastefulness and improvidence of the average American, has aggravated their sufferings in their present economic crisis.) Extreme cleanliness (if it can be called a luxury) is the only exception to be made. This luxury I certainly indulged in in the little infirmary where I was lodged pending the evacuation of a room in the main building.

When I finally did enter, I found myself the neighbour of two typical American hobbledehöys. They welcomed my arrival by dumping down a lump of homemade "fudge" on my table, and hoped I'd enjoy it. I did. But I enjoyed the dialogues and lively performances they unwittingly treated me to at bedtime still more. I warned them that the thin partition and door which divided our rooms brooked no secrets. They were not dismayed.

On the contrary, their last performance was the liveliest and most entertaining of all. They were evidently imitating the peculiarities of their different teachers. - "Here goes old mademoiselle! - 'Le comte de Versailles' ... (pronounced "cornter de Versaiyer" in the exaggerated Marseillaise way.) - "Now for Pavlova!" A solid bump against the door announced the ballet was in full swing. - "What about the Englishman? - 'Oh, dash it!' (uttered with an ultra affected British accent.) - "Ssh..., Miss... might hear", (accompanied by giggles and whispers.)

A knock at the door, and the matron's gentle voice was heard saying - "Goodnight, girls. No more talking now." (The warning "winks" had passed unheeded, as usual.) A lull ensued, followed by a stage whisper - "Say, what shall we do next?" - "I know what; let's play at being Miss Arrow-smith, <sup>(the matron's name).</sup> You'll be the arrow and I'll be the smith.".....Finis.

One day I was privileged to see the interior of all the girls' sanctuaries. The firemen had come on a tour of inspection and I was asked to accompany them round. Oh, the disorder that reigned in those dens! I was ashamed to let the firemen see it, (though I expect they were more used to it than I was.) We simply had to pick our way gingerly over the clothes, cushions, and ~~nick-nacks~~ strewn all over the floor, (some of the wearing-apparel hanging half out of the open chest-of-drawers.) I suppose any attempt in the college to correct this untidiness would have been resented. Such is one of the fruits of modern home "bringing-up"! (Sovietism goes much further still. It teaches the children to accuse their parents when they exercise any authority over them, and the parents are forthwith punished.)

My work in the office consisted chiefly of drawing up references of each girl's state of health. How many youngsters (at least in the States) disburden themselves of adnoids, tonsils, appendices, etc., and feel the happier for it! This prosaic occupation was somewhat enlivened by the distant sound of musical chords being played the livelong day. I wondered at the whence and the wherefore, and soon discovered they proceeded from the big hall below, where the girls were taking lessons in the famous Dalcroze Method of Eurythmics.

This Method was enchanting, especially when one saw the artistic side of it in a demonstration given by the Swiss teacher. One of the items was a three-part fugue by Bach. Three different groups of girls represented

the 3 separate parts. Each group interpreted its rôle (even to the value of the notes) so well, all blending into a harmonious whole, as to render the music visible, so to say, to the onlooker.

To wind up my stay at that pleasant spot I went one day blackberrying. On the way I met someone else similarly occupied. - "Can you smell a skunk?", asked she. - "No, What's that like?", enquired I. - "Oh, if you had ever smelt one within a mile, you'd never <sup>stop running</sup> forget it", she rejoined. The next day I met the same person again. - "Have you found your skunk?", I asked. - "Good gracious, if I had I'd still be running away!" she exclaimed. , , ,

Ruminating on what the smell of a skunk must be like (and also fearing I might succeed in realising it), I returned to New York, pleased to have had an insight into a high-class wealthy American Institution.

Record XXII

It was getting hot in the "wee apartment" <sup>in New York</sup>. Everything was so tiny and compact you felt like a match in a matchbox. The New York apartment-houses are built for winter comfort and not for summer. How one longed for the Italian windows (opening out like doors) which would let in ALL the air of the aperture, and the Italian shutters which kept out the fierce heat and light of the day! What one DID get in the Italian line was the noise in the streets and the yells from the inmates. To make things still livelier a religious fête covering several days was being organized by the Sicilian section.

Booths <sup>were</sup> installed, vendors hawked their wares, bands played at street corners, whilst the procession - solemnly headed by New York policemen - threaded its way through the jostling crowds. The strangest object of all was the statue of the saint. Encircled by lighted tapers and borne aloft in mid-air, it was adorned with dollar banknotes fastened all over (contributed by its devotees.) When I asked the friars of the parish church the name of the saint, they said they had never <sup>heard</sup> of him. The whole show was probably some Sicilian invention of pagan origin.

Anyhow, the effects of all this jubilation on the American family living below me, and also on myself, were disastrous. They - took to the hills. I - took to my bed. Poor old Mrs. T. below had already incurred the wrath of the surrounding youthful emigrants by complaining to the

police about their noise. The police had popped the ringleaders into gaol. When liberated, they threatened revenge. Whereupon little Mrs. T. had forebodings and begged me to come to her rescue should I hear her screams.

After this episode I betook myself to the Children's Summer Home in Brooklyn. This was a philanthropic undertaking of an American millionaire for the New York poor. About 600 mothers from the slums with their babies were allowed to come ~~and spend~~ <sup>for</sup> a fortnight's rest and enjoyment there. All they had to do was to look after their children and make their beds at rising. A staff of young ladies would see to the rest. The novelty of the experience was inviting. It meant the opposite extreme to the wealthy school enterprise.

Alack for my ideal of Social Service Work! The following words might sum up those six weeks venture:- A vile jargon called English grated on one's ears all day; curses, blows, and wails from morning to night, interspersed with an occasional fight (to which the police were invited) and a discharge of the combatants - only to be replaced by new recruits at the end of the fortnight's recuperation. To escape the jangle of these discords I used to take refuge in an attic overlooking the sea-front, where the soothing sound of the waves <sup>calmed me</sup> drowned it. On the other hand, the friendly comradeship among the staff, the abundant delicious food, and the daily sea-bathing (minus the contact with floating dead dogs and oily glutinous tar cast off from nearby ships) <sup>were substantial compensations</sup> somewhat tempered the above daily amenities.

Never before did ~~one~~ <sup>I</sup> realise what a hell many of those women made of life and how brutal they were towards their children. No wonder the beast betrays itself in the masses, and criminals crowd the prisons! Surely the training of the spirit is far more vital to humanity than the imparting of knowledge or physical comfort, (however essential the latter be)? Knowledge and material progress without spirituality can never impart true happiness, (as Communism is doomed to discover with time.)

- "Look 'ere, <sup>if</sup> it t'wan't for us, yer wouldn't 'ave yer job!", twanged out one of those vulgar, bold viragos to one of the staff members one day.

- "I cannot understand how you gentlefolk can take the trouble to come and serve us poor creatures", gently remarked another woman of foreign and refined mien to me another time. <sup>This</sup> (which somewhat atoned for the insolent

spirit that animated the majority.‡

My first "job" in all this pandemonium was to teach the worthy mothers how to make "fireless cookers". Most of them, however, preferred their pugnacious pastimes to anything so tame and useful. So I was told off to assist a teacher (who could even manage a menagerie, I was assured) to look after the cripple department. These poor little unfortunates were the brightest and best behaved of the whole show, strange to say (and thanks to their menagerie-trainer, I presume.) It was pathetic to see them tumbling about in their games; yet every fall increased their mirth.

Then I was asked to tender my aid to the linen sanctuary. Finally I was promoted to the bathing-gown compartment. This was the most congenial section of all; for the children eagerly accepted my proffered wares and all they entailed. A burly, lumbering "Lett" (an emigrant from the Baltic Provinces) was entrusted with the drowning and salvage business.

There was still one corner of the compound which ~~X~~ must not be forgotten, namely, the site of the foundling-crèche. This corner contributed lustily to the ensemble of the wailing-symphony. (Americans are very disposed to adopt children when they have none of their own.) Among these squirming innocents, I noticed one poor wee skeleton of a nigger, and also another infant whose face and attitude seemed already burdened with age. A little dark beauty, found by the police abandoned in a park, would have won the prize. (How truly unworthy some parents are of their name!)

Three incidents in particular now stand out in relief. No.1 was a fierce thunderstorm. No.2 was a shipload of negresses and little niggers for a day's visit. No.3 was a jaunt to famous Coney Island.

The storm burst out one afternoon in the sudden, violent New York manner. Thunder, lightning, torrential rain, with screaming mammas, children, umbrellas, and perambulators racing and stumbling through it all to take refuge in the big wooden hall across the compound! To subdue the panic and allay the children's fear, I was asked to make them sing songs. Three were chosen for me - "Holy Night", "Poor old Joe", and "Sweet and low". Seeing it was midday in summer and the idea was to cheer up everybody, and also cover the noise of the flying thunderbolts outside, they seemed mighty appropriate! Anyhow, all were enchanted with them, and <sup>again,</sup> the weather too. For soon there was peace and serenity on the horizon ✓

Incident No.2 was most entertaining. By way of variety the inmates of the Summer Home changed colour, and one bright day suddenly turned black. The pleasure-launch came puffing in to the landing-pier and deposited on it a formidable array of buxom black mammas and chubby little niggers and negresses. Meanwhile, the white contingent was hoisted on board to make room for the Blackies on the grounds, and the launch sailed away with them on a pleasure cruise. Alack, most of them were seasick on the way and had to be landed at the nearest point, from whence they hastened back by train.

The Blackies (called Coloured People by the Americans) were determined to amuse themselves. Sure enough they did. The adults were like big children in their enjoyment of the sports, and set a good example of behaviour to the Whites.

This question of the "Coloured Race" has become very knotty and acute in the States. In the northern districts they are treated on a par with the Whites. But not so in the southern, where a negro is not allowed to ride the same tramcar. Their rapid propagation and their demand for equal status in every respect has created a problem for the Government. And justly so; seeing we Whites were responsible for their importation in the Slave Trade.

- "Let's go and see the quintessence of vulgarity", suggested I one day to a staff companion. - "O.K.", responded she, and off we sallied to Coney Island. Our expectations were not disappointed. Taste is certainly a whimsical and unaccountable quantity. Talk about the "superior and inferior complex" of human nature! Coney Island seemed to be the right place to meditate on these much-used up-to-date terms.

What weird ecstasy was there in slipping into a clown's attire and shooting down polished wooden precipices to have your head and limbs knocked into splinters at the bottom by coming into contact with the preceding "shooter"? Or, supposing you survived and were struggling to regain your equilibrium, to be whisked off your feet again from one revolving disc to the other, till you were finally shot off into some side-track to recover as best you could? - "Why, the thrill of it all! The thrill!" I can hear the American answer. We certainly admired the pluck shown and enjoyed the fun of looking on, especially at the "Wobbly Staircase" process.

The only "thriller" I and my companion ventured on was to go up in the Big Wheel. - "Oh why did we ever come up here!", exclaimed she, when we found ourselves perched up in mid-air, {probably for the night}, the machine having stuck.

Well, we DID come down in the end. With the enjoyment of this last thrill, the satisfaction of having probed the "quintessence of vulgarity" and the interesting experience of a Children's Summer Home, I made a triumphant return to New York with some of the children in a "<sup>char-a-banc</sup>charabanc" at the general break-up. The interim of waiting for my initiation into the Y.W.C.A. was now over. I left for the neighbouring state of New Jersey and made my entry in the town of M...

How often it happens in life that just the things you most look forward to, or on which you build your hopes, are just the ones to disappoint you. One unpleasant, inevitable result of Democracy, plus a weak point in the American character, <sup>was</sup> were the cause this time for my disappointment (though I am quite willing to believe I also may have been "weighed and found wanting".) Democracy has much to say in its favour. But the trying, objectionable feature I refer to, is this dragging down of what is finer, to the level of what is baser, in regard to social intercourse.

Communism preeminently patronises this regressive system, instead of raising the masses to the level of gentlefolk by refining their nature, feelings, manners, and mentality. (But, as aforesaid, respect and refinement are unknown qualities with the Bolsheviks.) Well, such was the case at this International Institute. The source of the trouble, however was of "emigrant" origin forming part of our staff.

The town <sup>of N.</sup> itself was as much of a hotchpotch of Italians, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Russians, Bolsheviks, Ukrainians, etc., as New York was. One sometimes wondered where the Americans came in?

We tried to form a nucleus among these Slavs by giving them English lessons - even attacking the formidable Bolshevik contingent. But there was no unity among them and our efforts came to naught.

The churches (minus the Bolshevik one!) were all represented side by side in one section of the town. I remember being attracted by an inscription in Russian letters over the entrance of one of them, and went in.

Behold, it turned out to be the Uniat-Church - the Greek-Russo Church joined to the <sup>Holy</sup> Latin See.

Like all the Eastern Churches united to Rome, the eastern ritual and language are retained in the sacred ceremonies. (Go and see the celebrations at Sant'Andrea della Valle Church in Rome during the Octave of Epiphany.) Some people never seem to realise their ideals in life. I occasionally do. One was, when I found myself later on following the beautiful ritual and music of the Russian-Uniat Church in Paris.

Meanwhile I was following the pretty Russian Christmas customs in the emigrant colony, and so getting a whiff of Russia even out there. The American Christmas was also very attractive. Whatever the Americans do, they do it with buoyancy and geniality. You are welcome everywhere - just as the red flowers and the lighted tapers they place on the window-sill during Christmastide symbolise the spiritual welcome they extend to the Infant Christ to enter their homes that Holy Night. (A most charming custom, also kept up on Ireland.)

I also used to run round the corner of an evening to the night-school and make the typewriter trot to the rhythm of a gramophone; or compete in writing-races on it with others - (two American stunts for obtaining precision and speed.) A demonstration was given by an expert woman-typist to illustrate these two points, as well as that of concentration. Her speed was magic, her spelling ~~of~~ something dictated and chosen at random by the audience, faultless. And all this accomplished in one or two minutes, whilst she answered questions and even worked out a sum at the same time! Americans go in for being experts.

Their most attractive qualities are geniality, kindheartedness, boundless vitality, and the interest they all seem to take in everybody and in everything. - "Never say die", is their motto. But their restless, enterprising, sensational-loving spirit makes them somewhat superficial, and very unstable. Keeping their word does not carry so much weight as it does with us. Promises, arrangements, ~~even in business~~, - all vanish easily, if something more advantageous or suitable suddenly turns up.

It was just the "weak point" ~~of~~ (afore-mentioned) and the discordant atmosphere created by the democratic microbe, which brought my first attempt at Social Service Work to an abrupt end. I was longing to return to my beloved Italy. An answer to my S.O.S. from a dear friend in the Eternal City

said - "Yes, come." Within a month's time I embarked. But not before an incident had befallen me which was to influence the rest of my <sup>career</sup> life.

I T A L Y

Record XXIII

The delay in launching a new Italian passenger liner on which I had booked my passage formed the link which led up to the landmark in <sup>my life</sup> question. I had to wait another month, *in the U. S.*

Meanwhile, I had gone up to New York to give a lecture on my adventures in Russia to a college of girls. When it was over and I was about to leave, a religious was sent in to talk to me. She was the head teacher of a new American method of teaching music to children through singing. Whilst conversing, she told me she felt "inspired" to ask me to come and study the Method pending the arrival of the ship. I joyfully consented and forthwith set to work. The subject appealed to me in every way. It was music combined with a great philanthropic purpose, namely, imparting it in a most attractive and interesting manner (through this Method) to the masses of children throughout the world. But more of this later on when I returned to the States to pursue this study. At the end of the month I did my exam-paper, passed, and promised to return in two years time and resume my studies.

The last week I spent in a convent in the heart of the city. Here I met two other young lady-boarders, both Spanish, and both very charming. One (from Bolivia, S. America) was to be my ship-mate. The other - well, she turned out to be a near relative of the ex-Spanish King Alfonso (a truly amiable and simple princess, staying there incognito for reasons of her own.  $\frac{1}{2}$  The secret was revealed only when I was on boardship.

Instead of the fine new liner we had been awaiting, (and which was not yet launched), we found ourselves berthed on a primitive democratic Italian steamer with only one Class and the Steerage. The bed-linen was horrible; the taps in the cabin were waterless; the bells did not ring; and breakfast was a vile quasi-non-existent repast (as it mostly is with <sup>dians</sup> Italy). As for the passengers, the following episode will give an idea of their calibre. When a couple among them disembarked at Palermo, they produced luggage labels to claim their baggage, (which, of course, had remained on the wharf in New York!) Not being able to read, they had treasured

these labels as receipts - ergo, wailing and wringing of hands when the mistake was explained, poor simple creatures! To balance these discomforts, the Italian crew was ultra nice, and there was a sprinkling of very pleasant Americans among the voyagers.

I lay prostrate, as usual, in my horrid berth, tended by my pretty Spanish cabin-mate, (instead of my tending her.) She WAS a plucky little thing! To follow her vocation she had left her family and wealthy home in Bolivia, and was going to Rome to enter the convent of her choice. Of course her sweet affectionate nature felt the sacrifice. But her courage overcame this.

When our "tub" (for really it was nothing more) touched at Palermo, we toppled out, ~~and~~ paddled over to the shore, and had a peep at that most lovely and picturesque of southern capitals. The Italians declare the site is reminiscent of the Golden Horn - <sup>the</sup> "Conca d'Oro".

The Sicilians are a proud and a far more reserved race than the Italians. <sup>(due to Spanish & other mixed bloods perhaps?)</sup> ~~(due, perhaps, to Spanish domination?)~~ They speak their own dialect. Whatever liveliness they possess seems to be expressed in the baroque and brilliant colouring and designs on their carts and vehicles. We did not stay long enough to see all the sights and works of art. Our gallant little tub was soon ploughing its way to Naples. This was the roughest part of the whole voyage. All were down in their berths disgracing themselves - except myself! - (owing to my having come to the end of my tether, I suppose.)

Italy at last! I could hardly believe I was back again in that most beloved of countries after 9 years roving the seas. Dearly would I have loved to have made a brief halt and looked <sup>up</sup> the old haunts in "Napoli". No. That meant more expense. A very efficient Cook Service man quickly hustled any lingering temptation away and bundled us slap-dash-bang into the Roman Express, after slipping our luggage duty-free through the Customs with consummate art.

Naples has so changed during the last 20 years <sup>that</sup> many sections would not be recognisable. One would look for slummy, picturesque ~~typical~~ Santa Lucia quarter in vain. The present King and Mussoline have gone in for a general cleaning-up.

Within a few hours speed through country I knew so well, our express roared into the Eternal City. - "ROMA! ROMA! ROMA!" yelled the railway

guards.  $\frac{1}{2}$ As if any of us doubted the fact! $\frac{1}{2}$  - "Ci credo" ("I believe it"), I answered. - "ROMA!", they snapped back, and went on to convince others.

The Italians (like the New-Yorkites) can do nothing without vim and noise. The hot Latin blood accounts for this. They never talk. They simply screech. (I speak for the masses.) And strange to say, the screeching seems to invigorate instead of exhaust their lungs. But oh, how sweet did it sound to my ears just then. For were not the screechers assuring me I was back in my "Roma"?

There was the dear old Stazione Termini, Piazza Ezedra, Via Nazionale - all so familiar and looking - oh, so friendly! After the usual struggle with the luggage we drove away in an old Roman "botte" (public carriage and now a relic of the past) to the convent.

The next morning I left my little Spaniard to enter upon her new life, and betook myself to my friend in whose family I was to live for the present. How strange it seemed to pick up the thread again of the old Roman life I had dropped nine years ago! It was still "Roma", with a lot added. Like all civilized capitals she was bound to keep time with the onward march of progress. For was she not "Urbs Aeterna?"

Brand new quarters had sprung up on all sides, and the whole place had acquired the cachet of a big city - "L'andamento d'una grande città", as a Roman proudly expressed himself. The noise beat New York (if possible), what with the cobbled streets and every motor-horn tooting without a moment's respite. However, there seemed to be less arguing between the traffic and the police than of yore. (For the Roman is no lover of regulations and laws, and excels in arguing, gesticulating, and bargaining, as all Latin races do.) ~~This was likely due to the incipient spirit of Fascism.~~

OF COURSE this Fascist revolution MUST occur shortly after my arrival in Rome. (As if two in Russia were not enough!) When I saw the battalions of those young, determined Fascisti marching through the streets saluting the flag with outstretched arm (ancient Roman-wise), methought, "Well, here we are in for it again!" Thank God it turned out a peaceful upheaval. Altogether Fascism has proved a great boon to Italy, <sup>- coming, as it did, at the right psychological moment.</sup> although, ~~But,~~ like everything human, it has its imperfections, as time will prove.

Had Russia had her Mussolini in her hour of need, she would still exist; but in a higher, freer, and happier state. Even had we Allies re-

*To be omitted if desired.*

ained true to her and sent our promised help IN TIME and in sufficient force to that brave, struggling hero - General Wrangel - what a different tale she would now tell! (See General Wrangel's Memoirs.) The Bolsheviks have acted consistently in changing the name of Russia to that of United Soviet Socialist Republics. For Russia no more exists, except in the hearts of the real Russians. May Providence resuscitate her in His own good time and make her a great, free, happy, God-fearing nation! (Excuse this digression. You see the Russians are forever enticing me off the beaten track - even in my beloved Italy.) So let us return to our Fascisti and Roma Eterna.

The term Fascismo comes from the word "fascio" - a bundle. The ancient lictors used to carry a bundle of rods with an axe projecting in the middle as an emblem of supreme power. The Government at that time was so weak it easily succumbed to the impetus of the strong, tidal wave of patriotism which was then sweeping over Italy. Mussolini (a self-made man and formerly a rabid socialist) came to the fore and steered the Roman galley into peaceful waters, leaving progress and prosperity in its wake, (as well as ~~some~~ scum - inevitable with all that is human.)

Evidently he was the right man at the right moment, to judge by the results. His masterful piece of diplomacy in solving the problem of the Temporal Power of the Church will ever remain to his credit. The town and the whole country soon fell in with the new Régime and have gone forward with gigantic strides ever since. <sup>(Will he end by suffering</sup> ~~The relics, of course, are~~ <sup>from a swollen head, as so many dictators do, and thus ruin all the</sup> ~~jealously guarded and preserved, but seem to be more and more swallowed~~ <sup>good he has done for his country?)</sup> "Qui vivra, verra" (who will live, ~~by the surrounding growth,~~ <sup>will see"), as the French say.</sup>

How I revelled in those rambles again through the Foro Romano; the Palazzi dei Cesari on the Palatine Hill; along the Via Appia to the catacombs; to San Paolo fuori le Mura and the Tre Fontane, and to all the other glorious old haunts! (It would take far too long to describe all <sup>(and the "Palazzi dei Cesari"</sup> this.) The walk, for instance, through the ruins of the Forum <sup>on the</sup> Palatine Hill was the ordinary "classical" walk of every Roman child, woman, or man on a Sunday.

The Romans are usually lazy, slow, and conservative (though probably Mussolini has bucked them up somewhat.) To be born a Roman is the fulfilling of all duties in life, they seem to think. These traits, of course, do not detract from their good qualities.

The Russian refugee colony was also a powerful magnet. <sup>for me</sup> (Here I am at it again! But this time the track really does lead there.) Some of them I had known in their prosperous days before the War. All the more reason for being drawn ~~xxx~~ to them now in their misfortune. Many of them were living within the precincts of the Russian Embassy. But directly Italy recognised the Soviet Government, they were all expelled and the place was taken over by the Bolsheviki representative. Thanks to the kindly intervention of the Pope who forestalled their plight, a fine outbuilding belonging to one of the Roman princes had been prepared to receive them. (Pope Pius XI, by the way, <sup>was</sup> ~~is~~ keenly interested in the welfare of all Slav refugees, having previously been Papal Nuncio in Poland ~~for a~~ time.) Some Belgian Sisters were entrusted with <sup>care</sup> the run of the place.

The refugees ~~(all of the Greek-Russo faith)~~ were dismayed at the prospect of living in a "convent". But they soon discovered their freedom remained intact and that one or two regulations proved rather a benefit when having to lead such a promiscuous life. Besides, they told me, they <sup>Sisters</sup> became endeared to the <sup>Sisters</sup> ~~Sisters~~ <sup>through</sup> because of their kind sympathy. I tried hard to find them work. But Rome was not a good place for that. (If only everybody would treat their neighbour as they would like to be treated, how much more easily the earth would wag on! Surely the world has not dealt over generously with the Russian refugees! From my own experience with Russians, I know they would have treated us more magnanimously, had we been the victims of a revolution. - "Vae victis!" - "We Russian refugees are not even allowed to die!", exclaimed one poor victim when <sup>attempted</sup> rescued from suicidal drowning at Ostia, (the port of Rome.)

Some of these male unfortunates in Rome were lodged in such a slummy quarter on the Campidoglio, <sup>that I</sup> ~~you~~ dared not approach it. One of them declared he was the Prince of Cyprus and King of Jerusalem! Another used to sleep in his bunk under an open umbrella - "To ward off evil spirits", he said. They all consoled themselves, however, with the thought that they were living in one of "the most historical spots in the universe", as one proudly announced.

The rallying point for the whole colony was their Club. Here they could feed their bodies and minds with a daily dinner and a library, as well <sup>as</sup> indulge in a little social intercourse. (It was here - in this "Sala Canova", still in existence - I met Prince Youssouppoff of <sup>(fame.)</sup> Rasputin)

He had married the beautiful Grand Duchess Irina, (niece of the late Czar.) And it was they who won the recent law-suit against the film "Rasputin".

#### Record XXIV

My first summer in Italy was spent with my friend and her family at Grottammare - a picturesque place on the Adriatic. Italian seaside resorts are delightful - (minus the mosquitoes). The summer months last from June to the end of September. There being no tide to speak of, either in the Mediterranean, or the Adriatic, the bathing establishments are built right over the water. To be able to cool off the great heat of these four months - in, on, or beside the water, was simply "scrumptious"! Many Italians slip into their bathing-costume first thing in the morning, bathe - eat - sleep - make merry - walk about in it, till it is time for them to slip back into their night attire again. By way of a change, they occasionally appear in their "accappatoio" (bath-cloak) and bask in the <sup>sun.</sup>

However attractive that pretty spot showed itself to be, the Mediterranean was altogether preferable. The sunsets there were gorgeous, and the summer daylight and warmth lasted longer. The Adriatic being on the east coast deprived us of all this.. A most captivating sight were the fishing-smacks with their different coloured sails adorned with divers designs. They made quite a startling effect when a certain number of them appeared together.

Like many of these small places, Grottammare was divided into two parts: the old original township climbing up the mountain side, and the new residential quarter on the sea-level. Our abode was built right on the sands. Though the sea and the sound of the waves <sup>were</sup> ~~was~~ very refreshing, the ceaseless continuity of the latter proved too much of a good thing. We had to take refuge at the back of the house. Here another noise - the clanging racket of trains a few yards off - flung us on to the bosom of Neptune again.

A great deal of the coastal railway-line in Italy is laid down along the seashore - to the delight of <sup>the</sup> traveller and the despair of <sup>the</sup> resident. The nightmare every night was the Express running through one's room at 3 a.m. The engine always reserved its sudden piercing shriek for the moment it actually dashed across one's bed. - "Ha sentito il terremoto sta notte?" (Did you feel the earthquake this night?), a friend once asked

me. - "I feel one every night", I assured him.

Old Grottammare, above, cast such a spell at nighttime when illuminated, *that* I decided one day to investigate the cause. My friend always being absorbed in her family ties, I started off in the democratic company of the cook and the milkman. Sure enough, it was as picturesque, dirty, *malodorous*, smelly, and fascinating as most of these beauty-spots always are. We saw the "Duomo" (cathedral), and the house where one of the Popes was born. The splendid view and also the feeling of being beyond the reach of the vile *noise* motorcar and still viler motorcycle was most enjoyable. One of these latter execrable pests was trying to race on the sands one day. It got stuck and had to withdraw its vile presence, to our intense satisfaction.

*of the* Not that the advantages of these contrivances are to be denied. But surely the motorcar has proved as much a curse as a blessing, like most human inventions? It is essentially selfish. The benefit is just for the handful of riders inside. Noise, smell, dust, and the risk of life for the millions outside. No such thing as enjoying a country walk now-a-days, unless it be on some lost by-path. As for motor-cycles, they belong to the Lower Regions. With all their infernal din, only one or two demons at a time can revel in their explosive "jogging" thrills.

To confirm the logic of this tirade, behold me one fine evening walking along a country road with a Roman friend. Suddenly an ominous toot roused our ire and sent us flying in different directions to escape the ensuing cloud of dust. After a few minutes hiding, I looked about to see what had become of my companion. Lo, there she was seated in the motor-car and smilingly beckoning me in also! The two cavaliers had stopped their car and gallantly invited to drive us back. The tooting, the noise, and the dust somehow disappeared and I willingly jumped in. *But* the above denunciation holds good, for all that!

The summer months were now closing in and we wended our way back to Rome... Yes, here was the same room, in the same fine "palazzo" in the Corso Vittorio Emanuele of nine years ago, with the familiar sounds and *odours* smells in the street, and all to the tune of that most musical of tongues - Italian. And yet it was not "quite" the same. Things MUST change with the times. There was a go-ahead spirit everywhere. The women seemed to be more independent and more respected. And now, here I was teaching the

children instead of their mammas! The wheel of life must forever be turning ~~(turning~~ all too quickly for many of us, I trow!) <sup>And oh, how</sup> ~~It was great~~ <sup>happy I was</sup> to be able to take part again in all the sacred ceremonies in the Basilicas during Holy Week. That Easter brought another joy as well - to wit, a band of Kuban Cossacks.

These Cossacks, (as well as those from the Don), were units of General Wrangel's Army. When that hero was forced - fighting - into the Crimean Sea, (so to speak), he saved the remnant of his loyal Army (and also all the refugees he possibly could) by transporting the bulk of them to Constantinople and to Greece. This emergency had been clearly foreseen by him, and <sup>attendance of</sup> ~~the~~ Allied cruisers <sup>arranged</sup> catered for well in time. (Read "GOODEYE RUSSIA" by Captain Evan Cameron, and see what England did for the Russian refugees in the Crimea during that tragic exodus.) When I heard these Cossacks were shortly coming to Rome and were going to give five concerts there, I dashed off and also <sup>secured</sup> catered my five tickets well in time, so as to be dead certain of hearing them FIVE glorious times.

And glorious they were too! Of course they were given an enthusiastic ovation by the Russian colony. They appeared in their handsome picturesque Cossack uniform, and sang their grand, original songs, as only Russians can sing. As a finale they danced their characteristic Cossack dances - the famous dagger-dance winning the prize. This latter finished me. The whole performance had been too beautiful and had upset my equilibrium. Naturally I had to tell them this, and so betook myself to the green-room. Here I caught the conductor and the dagger-dancer and told them what I thought of them.

The former was a podgy male with bleary eyes (alack, from drink); but <sup>he had</sup> ~~with~~ most graceful movements when conducting. He used to mystify the audience by whispering into the ears of some of the singers before taking up his position in the foreground. (a more artistic way of giving the pitch than sounding it on an instrument.) Russians are such artists, (even when not trained professionals as these men were not), that they require no help from instruments. They make the accompaniment themselves, if needed, by imitating a complete orchestra with their mouths (a musical stunt much in vogue of late.) A <sup>lullaby</sup> serenade thus sung proved such an exquisite gem, <sup>that</sup> even the hot southern blood was lulled to quietude - only to burst forth at the awakening into frenzied applause.

The dagger-dancer was a tall, muscular, young man. To look at him you could hardly believe he could be as light and graceful as a "ballerina", and yet virile withal. His steps in the dance were so swift and minute he seemed simply to glide along, whilst the Cossacks standing around kept time by clapping their hands and humming <sup>the</sup> most charming little ~~harmonised~~ <sup>refrain</sup> air. He was bristling with daggers - three balanced in his mouth and two in the nape of his neck (supplied him by his on-looking comrades.) Ever and anon, whilst in full swing, he would jerk the middle dagger ~~(balanced upright)~~ from his mouth point downwards on to the ground, till the stage was ~~sewn~~ <sup>bristling</sup> with them. Then he wound up with a wild fling between them with an extra "kinjal" (Cossack dagger) in either hand.

I noticed certain strange movements with his outstretched arm, and asked what they ~~might~~ <sup>signified</sup> - "Imitating the soaring motion of the eagles" (which abound in some parts of the Caucasus), was the answer.

§ A couple of years later I was to meet the dagger-dancer and several of the others again in New York. §

Meanwhile, I showed my admiration for them in a practical way by presenting them with a couple of English-Russian grammars. They had expressed their wish to go to England. I made enquiries for them when in London the following year. But not having any capable impresario among them, my efforts came to naught. The enterprise was reserved for the Don Cossack Choir, which was much better organised, (though less fascinating than the Kuban. §

All these men (ex-officers and soldiers) were political exiles - due to their desperate courage and loyalty in defending their native soil. Should they return to Russia they would be treacherously shot down by the Reds, as thousands of others who trusted their word have been. They now tour the world living by their art. General Wrangel (now passed away) wished all his men to be self supporting, and was indefatigable in taking the means to this end. Their departure left a void in the hearts of the Russian colony. I understood why many of the ~~former~~ <sup>latter</sup> wept when they heard some of those patriotic songs sung with such poignant feeling.

Now please "Pazienza!" (a favourite Italian expression meaning "have patience"), if I relate just one more Russian episode before changing my Record.

Perusing the "Giornale d'Italia" one day, my eye caught the title in big letters "La straziante odissea d'uno studente russo" ("The heartrending odyssey of a Russian student!") - "Ah, here's something for me!", I exclaimed and eagerly scanned it. It was the same old story of misery and despair put into a sensational form for publicity's sake. A young student, failing in his efforts to earn a livelihood, ~~and in despair shooting him-~~<sup>shot</sup> ~~pon.~~ self (not mortally) in a revolver-shop, under pretence of buying the wea-

Off I flew to the big Public Hospital - looked him up - said a few words of sympathy and encouragement and promised to return again. Several of the Russian colony followed suit. Now, see how different the Russian psychology is to ours. I expressly avoided any reference to his action when talking to him. His compatriot, on the contrary, immediately started an animated discussion on the rights and wrongs of suicide.

The doctor having ~~concluded~~<sup>decided that</sup> an operation <sup>was</sup> unnecessary and that the bullets could remain where they were without any inconvenience to the possessor, ~~the~~<sup>student</sup> was told he must leave within seven days, if all went well. But all did not go well. The poor youth, through his own foolishness, was in for another "odyssey". Whether through morbid obstinacy, or through feverish delirium, he continually reiterated his determination to do away with himself. So much so, that the hospital attendants took alarm, and he was transferred to the observation-ward in the public lunatic-asylum <sup>beyond</sup> ~~out of~~ <sup>walls</sup> the city (this being the only other place where patients were under constant surveillance.)

So there was I phoning to all <sup>the</sup> mental hospitals in Rome (~~for~~<sup>not knowing</sup> his precise whereabouts had not been given me) and making enquiries. One call gave me the wrong number. - "Is this a lunatic-asylum?", I innocently asked. - "NO!", thundered the indignant answer with a clap of the receiver.

Finally I tracked him down and begged the Sisters to tell him I would come and see him. This I did, in turn with other Russians. Never before have I so frequented a mental-asylum, and never will again, I trust. It was uncanny to find oneself locked in a padded room with no handles to the doors, and in company of a dozen raving maniacs (plus the guard, of course.) Some of these were in straight-jackets and sound asleep on visiting days - a sleeping draught having been administered for the occasion. - "You always see the place at its best", said ~~the~~<sup>student</sup> speaking in Italian.

"It is at night it becomes a hell with the screams and fights. One of them always fancies I am in his bed and tries to kick me out. My neighbour there" (indicating the one in the straight-jacket) "threatens to murder us all." - "And how do you pass the time?", queried I. - "Writing my Memoirs on a Roman lunatic-asylum. After all, normal life is in here. The world outside is the madhouse." (A truly Slav conclusion, but with a grain of truth in it!)

How his compatriots and I laboured to get him away from that enforced "villeggiatura" (country outing)! - "Never in my life have I been favoured with so many billet-doux from titled heads!", exclaimed the chief superintendent of the asylum, pulling out a handful of them from his pocket. - "But any suspected patient who crosses this threshold is bound to undergo two weeks observation before leaving. It is the law of the country. The King himself could not counteract it." The student having shown refractory behaviour, two more weeks were added on to his "villeggiatura".

- "Now, look here", I admonished him, "every movement of yours is being watched. So just pretend to be mad by being very quiet and normal, and we'll have you out by the end of the month." Following this piece of good advice he was discharged as sane, and went spinning back to the city in a motorcar sent by a sympathising princess. Here we installed him in a room, paid for by contributions, and we arranged with some charitable English Sisters to give him one good meal a day at the convent, till he had recovered his strength and had also found work.

To make a long story short, here is the ending to this elegy. That summer I left for England. I promised to send him a line/<sup>now</sup> and then to cheer him up and keep him on the right track (for he had told me he was "un'anima traviata" - a soul gone astray.) I fear this was only too true, to judge by subsequent enquiries into his past - and present also. Though he seemed genuinely grateful for the help tendered him, he impressed one as being weak-willed, falsely proud, and intensely emotional. After a few months of "eternal" sworn friendship, gratitude, and affection, I heard nothing more from him. Probably he fell under bad influence and got on to his "wrong track" again.

A M E R I C A . 1924

## Record XXV

My two years furlough were over now. I had to fulfil my promise and return to New York to resume my study of the Justine Ward Method at Headquarters. The quota restrictions on the passenger traffic to the States were being strictly carried out. I fully experienced this when struggling to obtain a passport at the American Consulate in London. What miles of red tape had first to be unwound before one could grab the coveted passport dangling at the end! Why, I remember the good (instead of of bad, this time) old times when one could scour the whole world without asking any country's permit, except Russia's and Turkey's also, I believe.

Well, I succeeded at last in hooking my passport at the end of my line, thanks to certain tactics. Five days later I arrived in New York in the capacity of a student on board the gigantic liner "The Leviathan".

The following months were dedicated entirely to the study and practice of this most admirable of Methods for teaching music to the masses of children and adults through singing. (Those who wish for complete information on this progressive system should apply to) - "The Catholic Education Press, 1326 Quincey Str., Brookland Station, Washington, D.C." and obtain the circulars treating upon it.

Besides the usual daily and weekly courses every year, there is a Summer School carried on in the convent grounds for all those who wish to learn. Teachers and scholars come from all parts of the States to study and pass their examinations. Like most things American, it is all permeated with a lively, genial spirit, and is also full of interest. It certainly did require that spirit to sustain one throughout the intensive mental strain during all that suffocating New York summer heat. A tank of ice-water, and the strict injunction not to leave the premises without having drunk ten glasses at least, helped us to survive the test <sup>per.</sup>

During the rest of the scholastic year we Wardite teachers had to fly about New York parish <sup>the</sup> (and sometimes non-Catholic) schools and practise what we preached. Some of the schools took us into the neighbouring States as well. I found the American children altogether responded well. My British accent impressed them. I had to pronounce "can't" and "half",

Since writing this some radical changes in this method have taken place.

with the "a" as in "hat" - not to create too great a disturbance. But New York is such a melting-pot of nationalities <sup>that</sup> the foreign element was strong in many of the classes. During all my nine years teaching of this Method, I have always found the children very responsive to it, provided it was well taught, and thanks to Mrs. Ward's genius.

Some of the remarks during the lessons were simply delicious. Here are a few:- "Sister", said a mite to a religious one day when struggling to get her thumb into her glove, "sol" won't go into his hole!" This came from the child knowing that the thumb is always called "sol" in our "finger-drills". Likewise another tot came running up, saying - "Teacher, Tommy's always sucking "sol" (the teacher discovering the culprit was sucking his thumb.) And then the little English boy who politely asked if he could get the tape-measure when he saw me measuring the distance of one note from another with outstretched arm. When teaching the tendency of tones (personifying them so as to make them more real and vivid to the child's mind) to some little Canadians, and singing the notes to make them hear what I meant, I said - "You hear how little 'Fa' wants to go to 'Mi' and play with him. She's never happy without him." - "They better marry", promptly remarked a youngster of six.

Summer, 1925, saw me giving my maiden-courses in two charming places - Pembroke and Kingston, Ontario, Canada. ~~This is what we called Extension work at headquarters.~~ It really was about the most delightful and satisfactory trip of work I have ever undertaken, and it came off with flying colours. Nothing marred it, - A rare occurrence in life!

My first stop was at Pembroke - a pretty spot coquettishly poised on the undulating shore of the river Ontario (so broad at this point as to resemble a lake.) I arrived before dawn. The faithful Mother Superior was already awaiting me at the station. The Sisters were dears and ever so appreciative of the lessons. (Teaching ordinary subjects does not satisfy every soul. Some crave for more spiritual work. This I had found at last - thanks to Providence and to New York.

Talking about spiritual work and different ideas of different countries, I observed there was much more freedom in many respects in Canada than there was, say, in Latin lands - owing to difference in character, temperament, and mentality. (I speak chiefly about the Catholic religious

because my work lay principally among them.) For instance, I was amused to see the upper dormitory of the school accomodating many priests instead of the children, who were away on holidays. These priests had come from the neighbouring parts to follow their yearly retreat. As they were numerous, and the Bishop could not lodge them all, recourse was had to the Sisters.

We never saw them. All we heard were footsteps coming downstairs early in the morning, and then again in the late evening. The first day, though, was fairly noisy; for it was a general reunion of friends who met only on these occasions. Another day, there was not a sound, not even of the footsteps. The point of meditation had been Hell and Eternity. We wondered if our melodious strains (well within their hearing) proved to be "harmony" or "counter-point" in their spiritual exercises? They only remark~~ed~~<sup>ed</sup> they made was - "The Sisters must be fairly prosperous, for they are forever singing about their "dots" (the French word <sup>"dot"</sup> pronounced "do" *meaning dowry*).

These delightful Canadian Sisters now considered it proper to wind up the fortnight's courses with an excursion. In fact, I was treated to two of them - one to the Golden Lake, the other up the River Ontario. The first one has left the most vivid impress. I was determined to come in close contact with Red Indians directly I got the chance. A short train run - a gorgeous lake - and there was I and one of the Sisters picking our way along the shore to the house of a squaw and her family.

Well, this ~~squaw~~<sup>Redskin</sup> was pure breed; her husband only half-caste. But the children had the typical <sup>Redskin</sup> features and spoke English fluently. The eldest son proposed taking us for a peep of the Lake in his motor-boat. Away we skimmed across the winding waters encircled by lovely hills and scenery - the young stalwart Redskin, his little <sup>Redskin</sup> sister redskin, a nun, and myself - a strange assortment! And the best of it was, the rest of the party we had left on the shore preparing the picnic banquet did not know where we had disappeared to, till they saw us shooting past in our gallant skiff and company. We waved them an airy farewell.

The Red-Indians are a dying-out race, as we all know, <sup>(thanks to the effects of our civilisation upon them.)</sup> They still retain some of their native traits. They are very suspicious, superstitious, sometimes treacherous <sup>(thanks again to the Whites' former treatment of them)</sup>; but

staunch in their devotion once given, and still have that uncanny, stealthy way of making a sudden appearance, one knows not how or from whence. For instance, I happened to be absorbed reading something, whilst waiting for that picnic repast. When I looked up, I was startled to see a Redskin standing before me watching me. He had not stirred a leaf at his approach. Yet I am blessed with keen hearing.

One sees little of them. Occasionally a few squaws at the railway-stations with their infants strapped to their backs, and their husbands with long, straight, matted, black hair, and big cowboy hats. I suppose they relegate themselves to the reservations the Government has allotted them. Here they lead a lazy existence - hunting and fishing just enough for their daily needs. Surely their forefathers must be regarded as the noblest and most poetic of savage races - due, perhaps, to their intimate intercourse with nature? Some historians find strong resemblance between them and the northern races of Siberia. As for their music - listen to their songs with their poetic words (drawn up and edited by Thurlow Lieurance, an American musician who lived and married among them) and be happy for the rest of your life.

Now let us return to our picnic party whom we rejoined after our delicious escapade. The banquet was ready and we all enjoyed a merry meal. Suddenly a distant speck on the lake appeared, growing ever more visible and moving fast towards us. Behold, there was <sup>Dr</sup> Redskin mite of six paddling her tiny canoe all alone across the water! She jumped out, - plumped down a bunch of beautiful water-lilies on a Sister's lap, - skipped into her canoe again, and paddled off with all the skill and ease of an adult. A dainty finishing touch to "the end of a perfect day!"

The trip up the river in a pleasure-launch was less varied and eventful, however pleasant. The principal feature at the terminus of this cruise was the sight of the Rapids and the transport by the water of the huge trunks of timber.

My courses with their terminating "fling" now being over, I left the good Sisters to do their test-papers and went to Kingston on Lake Ontario. Here I had to begin all over again (the weak point of pioneering a Method.) But the appreciation of the work by the Religious was always so genuine, it somehow overcame the monotony of repetition to which the teacher was subjected.

This convent was fitted up with a proper guest-house, the inmates of which supplied the mental-hospital further away, I was told. Fortunately, my quarters were at a reassuring distance.

The fortnight's lectures being completed, again we treated ourselves to the inevitable outing. One excursion took us to the mouth of the St. Lawrence River and its Thousand Islands. The other landed us in the opposite direction at the Mental Hospital and the Public Penitentiary - an original "Finale"! The Sisters always seem to have brothers-in-law possessing just the right thing at the right moment. This particular brother-in-law owned a motorcar and a motor-launch into the bargain. One fine day he drove his sister-in-law, plus several novices, and myself to the mouth of the St. Lawrence, where that magnificent river flows into Lake Ontario.

Here we had a nice homely dinner with the dear old Irish parents of the Sister, then jumped into the motor-launch, flitted in and out of the Thousand Isles, and returned to the convent in the motorcar (eating ices by moonlight) only at 10 p.m. that night. Another instance of the free and broad ideas of the Canadian religious. But such outings spelt a red letter day for most of them.

The visit to the lunatic-asylum (as if I had not had enough of them in Rome!) was morbidly interesting, but not of pleasant reminiscence as the St. Lawrence spree.

Leaving these good Sisters I reluctantly wended my way back to New York - determined to spin out my keenly enjoyed trip to the last second and see Ottawa en route. So I traversed one end of the Lake by steamer and then motored across-country to the capital.

Ottawa is very picturesquely situated on hilly ground, the fine Parliament Buildings dominating the whole city. The gardens are beautiful. An old-time atmosphere seems to linger about the place - owing to the numerous French-Canadians living there, I suppose. Hearing so much French spoken and meeting all those "messieurs l'abbés" walking about the streets in their "soutanes" brought quite a whiff of France <sup>reminiscence</sup>.

This town, and still more Quebec (I regret could not see) are the two cities in Canada which have retained that French cachet most, I should say. All the schools, the hospitals, and public institutions in the country are built on a large scale - like everything in America -

and equipped up-to-date.

It was amusing to see the trains running right along the thoroughfares in the smaller settlements, in company with the traffic - a frequent occurrence in young countries, I was told. (Somewhat dangerous!) Montreal was another fine place. But I fear my peep was limited to the station, one church, and a few streets. What an impression of awe the vastness of the mighty St. Lawrence makes upon one at that point! Skirting the shores of Lake Champlain, New York State, was also <sup>a delightful experience</sup> ~~very pretty~~. Altogether the trip from Canada to New York is most alluring.

#### Record XXVI

Though New York told me to hurry up and return, I had hardly done so when I was sent flying back into Canada again. We teachers were handed like a willing pack of cards - shuffled - and then dealt out in all directions. This game suited me admirably, as long as I was shot off in the direction I wanted to go. - "Would you like to spend a year teaching in Toronto?", I was asked. - "RATHER!" was all I could gasp, and off I <sup>flicked</sup> ~~was~~ <sup>the</sup> only bother was that farcical passport business each time one crossed the frontier near Buffalo. Facilities were granted to American citizens and Canadians for their reciprocal visits. But I was English and had to go through the whole gamut every time.

Before leaving, let me mention another pleasant shock I got - the very unexpected reappearance of my Kuban Cossack Choir! I had been trying to keep track of them all along. But they had vanished beyond ken. Only vague rumours were heard of their whereabouts. And now here they were just a few "blocks" off - and I, of course, sitting in their midst plying them with questions.

Yes, they had had a hard time of it altogether since I last saw them. <sup>And</sup> ~~No~~ wonder, seeing their unbusiness-like ways and gypsy-fashion of doing things! They had stayed in Paris - quarrelled - made it up - had gone to Jamaica and Mexico - quarrelled again - and then half of them had come up here to New York. They wished to give a concert on their own for publicity's sake and thereby obtain a good engagement. As I had a short respite before renewing my Canadian campaign, I set to work broadcasting their artistic fame. The concert came off - their talent was recognised - and they got their coveted engagement. I now set off for Toronto, Canada.

Of all the big Canadian towns Toronto is perhaps the most ~~AMERICANIZED~~, Canadians have just as much "twang" in their speech as their American neighbours. However, just as the American twang strikes us, so does our lack of it strike them. Some considered our British accent affected. The majority of the educated Americans admire it. The Canadians - like the Australians - seemed a link between the English and the Americans. Both nations possess that genial, kindly, ~~and~~ hospitable spirit which makes them lovable.

Toronto was an attractive place. What length those tramcars were, to be sure! About a mile of seat to choose from, and the ticket-collector comfortably installed halfway down with a small stove to keep him warm and cheery! I never saw such a humane contrivance before.

My first Canadian Christmas was also unique. A case of supposed smallpox had broken out in the school I was staying in. This meant either being quarantined, or escaping across the road there and then to the auxiliary boarding-house of the University students (then on holidays.)

I chose the latter alternative in company with a few other "odds-and-ends" left behind during the vacation. Our little ménage was carried on "à la russe" - get up when you like - have your meals when you like - do what you like, etc., etc. Communication with the convent was confined to signalling and <sup>dropping</sup> stray notes dropped over the wall. I decided, however, to do something less desultory on Christmas Day, and so trotted my two French Canadian hobbledehoys, plus the cook's daughter and the Irish landlady's daughter, to the neighbouring Y.M.C.A. Here we were entertained from morn to even in a right royal manner - for which we have blessed those gallant knights ever since.

When the smallpox scare turned out to be a false alarm, we trundled ourselves and belongings across the road again and resumed normal life. But not for long. Hardly had the school reopened, when a boarder was discovered to have brought the smallpox microbe back with her. The tocsin was again sounded; but with tables reversed. "We" were the prisoners this time, and the students across the road had to do all the signalling. Again did the queer elusive microbe turn out to be something innocent. But the Medical Board was satisfied. They had had their "pound of flesh" by unduly prolonging their quarantine enforcement.

The scholastic year in Toronto wound up with three big events:- A trip to the Niagara Falls; a mass-demonstration of all the schools in the Arena and Townhall; and then - my first (and last, I trust) taste of what a hospital is like.

The trip to Niagara was both delightful and sensational. Two of the Sisters came with me. First, there was the crossing <sup>over</sup> of the Lake - then an alarming electric-car drive beside the raging waters of the river - then the town of Niagara itself - then the most marvellous spectacle of the Falls - then the crossing of the bridge (the States at one end and Canada at the other) - and finally the landing in a haven of rest at the convent-school on the Canadian side. Besides the Falls, one of the most impressive sights was the broad expanse of the river flowing above on a level with the eye, as it were. ~~&~~The Americans have spoilt their side of the river with ugly industrial <sup>constructions.</sup> ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ Not so the Canadian. <sup>1/2</sup>

Luckily we missed the last boat back and had to spend the night at the convent. We hoped thereby to see the wonderful coloured illuminations of the Falls, which the American side projects every evening. The power of the Falls was used for the producing of these illuminations. Thus the force of the water was made to react on itself. But unfortunately a dense mist just that night hid everything from view. {A small steam-tug took visitors to the bottom of the Falls - as near as it was possible to approach that thunderous seething cauldron."THRILLS! again!)

The Arena performance was the usual yearly demonstration of eurythmics, sports, etc., including the national dances of the different countries represented. A concert of sacred motets sung by children's choirs was given in the Townhall. Those taught by the Ward Method were considered the best.

The "hospital-taste-episode" came last. It certainly was the most thrilling for me; for it meant leaving my tonsils behind. Not that I regretted them. On the contrary; they had upset me <sup>during</sup> the whole winter <sup>that</sup> I decided to get rid of them.

To partake of this treat I invited a Russian refugee friend (for of course I knew the whole colony there) to share my room at the hospital and follow my example. She was an ex-opera singer and was suf-

fering both from tonsillitis and laryngitis. It was a strange and original invitation; but a mighty practical one.

She came. Her goodnature and cheeriness tallied with her physical dimensions - which was saying a lot. Russian-wise, she smoked dozens of cigarettes and chatted far into the night, for she knew she would have to be dead silent for the next few days.

The next morning as I was wheeled out of the torture chamber, my Russian friend was wheeled in - also "lying in state". We waved to one another. No more chatting and smoking that night, nor for ten days to come for her, poor creature. The incision had been much deeper, as she had laryngitis as well. Within the year, however, she was singing in public again. So three cheers for the surgeon!

- "Return!", came the summons from New York. I did. The Summer School had just opened with all its usual verve. Many enjoyed taking the courses still more the second or even the third time; for the Method is susceptible of developments, - consequently, ever new and ever keeping pace with the progressive trend of education.

But I was able to follow the morning lectures only, being told off to give courses in the afternoon in a hospital - not to the patients (that might have retarded their recovery) - but to the Canadian Nursing Sisters. They wished to improve their choir-singing. This pastime was decidedly more pleasant than having tonsils out.

The heat was fierce. But the good Mother Superior sustained me from falling to pieces with iced drinks and an electric-fan. She said she was kept so busy all day she could squeeze in her home-work only when the doctors were speaking to her. I quite believed it. For I found her talking about "rheumatic" (instead of "neumatic") treatment in her Gregorian homework paper, and then again something about using a "tonic" in reference to the Tonic Chord. In spite of these new medicinal expressions in music, she did a good test paper and got her certificate.

Meanwhile, the hectic six weeks of the Summer School had come to an end and were followed by a lull. This meant a general settling down and the correcting of the exam-papers - a somewhat tedious task, occasionally enlivened by the fanciful answers of some of the examinees. - "What is rhythm?" - "Rhythm", declared one very practical-minded soul, "might

be compared to the gentle purr of a well-regulated motorcar." Such is New York inspiration!

Early autumn reopened the schools. A certain number was assigned to each teacher. The year's work began again. But I was evidently not destined to see it out. Headquarters considered the time propitious for introducing the Method into England. Was not I the right person to act as pioneer? A little shuffling of cards - and off I was bundled again. But not before I had bid farewell to my Cossacks round the corner.

The so-called "blocks" between Streets 120 to 130 contained quite a colony of Russian refugees, not to mention the teeming numbers of negroes. Russian cafeterias appeared all over the city. I occasionally treated myself to eating "borshtsh" and "shtshii" (of Siberian reminiscence) to the sound of "balalaikas". Alas, I found the poor young choir-conductor in the last stages of consumption - the fatal result of a violent chill. The day I sailed for England, a solemn Requiem Service was sung by his Cossacks in the Russian Church for his burial.

ENGLAND again. 1927.

Record XXVII

How orderly and quiet did fair Albion appear after the rush and roar of New York! We love peace and privacy more than our cousins across the ocean. And how much pleasanter it was to step into a small carriage compartment on landing at Southampton than into one of those long public Pullman-cars! However, tastes differ and always will (good for trade and for man's bump of invention.)

I will not linger long describing my pioneering attempts these first months in London. To make a new system known and then freely adopted (especially if it means ousting an old one) requires influence and backing up by the country you are in - props not given to me. The very novelty of a thing, apart from its intrinsic value, acts as a magnet on the American. We English are more conservative and want to see results first. Those who took the courses and saw the results of the Method on the children were convinced of its superiority, except the few prejudiced and "stick-in-the-old-rut" souls who are to be found everywhere.

Ireland responded more eagerly, especially for the sake of the Plain Chant. So I went to Erin that summer and gave a series of courses there.

Éire

I had never seen the country before and was delighted to get this chance. How typical was my arrival at the sleepy town of Waterford! - "Porter, a taxi please." - "No such thing here, mum. Only jaunting-cars", and up I was hoisted. Even then I did not know where to sit. I had taken the little seat running down the middle for the luggage compartment and had deposited my belongings on it.

The first jog dumped me down on the top and pinned me there for the rest of that ride. It was all delightfully Irish. With one hand holding an open umbrella (for, of course, it must be raining), and the other clutching sometimes at my baggage, sometimes at the seat, I was jogged through the drowsy streets away up the hill and through the pretty convent grounds. Here I was jerked off on to the threshold of the big convent-school. Only a cat had crossed my path throughout the whole jaunt that early morn. ~~Is there a taxi at the station now?~~

What a contrast was this secluded spot to the late New York surroundings! The peaceful, spiritual atmosphere of it all was most soothing and delectable. But not quite so much could be said for the other convent on the opposite side of the town. The Sisters there were also dears. But oh, that ghastly slaughter-house next door! How could the good religious make their meditations with the squeals of pigs ringing in their ears? - "Why don't you walk in the garden a bit?", asked the Sister who served me. - "Oh, those pigs!", I ejaculated. - "Shoore you'll get used to them", she rejoined with the pretty soft Irish accent.

That dearest of Mother Superiors also took me for a fling one day - a motor-drive far away up the coast. How enjoyable were those gorgeous views of country and sea, and miles away from the pigs too! (In fact, I had not seen so many black hogs about a town ever since I had left Harbin, China.)

It was in this quiet corner I met madam Montessori - the creator of the well-known Montessori system of education for little ones. She struck us as a very serious, unpretentious-looking woman. Not speaking English, the short lecture she gave us in Italian had to be translated into English (in default of Irish.) She was very interested in the Justine Ward Method, but did not stay long enough to be present at my courses. The Sisters declared her system worked admirably with the Irish children, es-

pecially in giving them more self confidence.

From Waterford I went to Cork - another pretty place and more alive than the former. Why, it actually had electric tramcars running through! How clearly I can still see that reposeful peep from the convent window - the meadow in front with cows quietly grazing, and the river Lee swiftly flowing at the bottom with the hills rising up on the opposite bank.

Scotland was to be the next battlefield, with Edinburgh as vantage-ground. This gave me a chance of going right across Ireland via Dublin and Belfast to Larne, with only a train-view of everything, of course. The bustling activity of the northern towns made a striking contrast to the southern. (The Catholic Irish have always been accused of thinking more about their souls than their bodies and living more in the next world than in this. *And quite right too!*)

How near Scotland seemed to Ireland from Larne! Nearer than Calais to Dover. But the actual crossing <sup>took</sup> ~~xxx~~ longer, because of the inland position of Stranraer. From Larne I journeyed on to Edinburgh via Glasgow. What a fine impression Edinburgh makes when the train lands you right on to that strikingly handsome Prince's Street, with the grim old castle towering above! The whole place was enchanting. It fulfilled one's expectations. My abode here, as elsewhere (minus the slaughter-house spot), lay in pleasant pastures. The convent-school had formerly been a fashionable thermal resort. Consequently, baths ran riot - even to a huge swimming-pool.

As my pioneering work was always a repetition covering the same ground, I had some leisure time to visit all the historical sites; - the Castle, Holyrood (so reminiscent of Mary Queen of Scots), the lovely cathedral <sup>of</sup> St. Giles, Arthur's Seat <sup>(a mountain top)</sup>, etc., and also explore the fine surroundings. All these are so well-known I will not describe them. But I cannot omit mentioning the trip with friends in a tourist-car to Loch Lomond and Loch Katryn. Limited time gave us only a tiny peep of each, but enough to whet our appetites for more. Loch Katryn, in particular, struck us as a gem, when we suddenly came upon her at the bend of the road. The only thing that marred our enjoyment was the rain. (But that was surely in keeping with the surroundings?) What with

the lovely hills, the heather, the bagpipes, and the Lochs all shrouded in mist, there was no mistake about being in bonny Scotland, and just as one always fancies her.

Back to dear smutty old London again, where a happy winter was spent teaching all those of goodwill. The English children responded just as well as all the other nationalities, which speaks for the universality of the Method. In fact, it is now taught by missionaries (who have taken the courses) to the Chinese, the Japs, the Koreans, and even to the Esquimaux in Alaska. The wealthy spoilt girls and boys in their "teens", who do not want to trouble about anything (and they are to <sup>be</sup> met with everywhere) are the only unresponsive pupils I have ever encountered. Indiscipline in classes is also an obstacle to progress, seeing what a great strain the actual teaching imposes on the teacher's voice. Personality ~~contributes~~ is an important factor towards the success of the Ward Method. For the children have no books (except in the advanced work) on which to rivet their attention. Their mind must be concentrated on every word and movement of the teacher.

During the Christmas respite I took a little run up to Oxford (yet another town of my desires.) I stayed at Cowley with some Italian and Irish Sisters, and spent the day running over to the Brothers and completing the courses some of them had begun with me in London. It was an interesting experience in every way, and the sequel still more so. These scholars did their Gregorian test-papers so well <sup>that</sup> Headquarters very kindly sent me a cheque, expressing satisfaction with the result of the work and telling me to go and spend Holy Week and Easter listening to the French Benedictine Monks of the famous Abbey of Solesmes singing their liturgical chants.

- "Je ne demande pas mieux" (I ask for nothing better), as the French say, and off I went, delighted to be in France again and to hear that daintiest of languages spoken all around. My route lay via Paris. This meant seeing my dear princess G. (of Czarskoe-Selo days) again. During the <sup>Russian</sup> Revolution and the aftermath, we had lost track of each other. Through the help of Russian friends I had discovered her whereabouts some years previously. (The Russian refugee colony in Paris being one of the largest.)

So here we met again after thirteen years roving the seas and continents - one long trail of misfortune and hardship for her; for me, the

most sensationally interesting period of my life. Like most of the refugees she had been hunted down and harassed by the daily struggle for existence, both for herself and her family. Could she but have written all her adventures during those times of trial, what a volume she would have filled! She did start writing about political and social conditions when in Vladivostok, but was told to "keep quiet", as too much truth was revealed! I still hope to hear<sup>her</sup> relate all this some day. But those two days in the little hotel were all too short. I had to go to Solesmes - five hours by Express from Paris.

These monks of Solesmes are some of the most renowned for their perfect rendering of the Gregorian Chant. It is thanks to them that it has survived the centuries of corrupt taste in sacred music, and that we now possess the edition of it in its present serviceable form. Like all genuine things - (especially of a pure, spiritual nature like the Plain Chant) - it will take time to cultivate the public taste to understand and relish its severe beauty. - "Sacred music must be primarily prayer, and furthermore, liturgical prayer," (to quote the Church's words), "vesting itself with the exact form and spirit of the Liturgy", (instead of appealing only to the senses and the emotions, as so much of it does - be it fine art, or merely "sob-stuff". The Catholic Church admits of polyphonic music, but only of a truly sacred character, and not "art for art's sake".

After this "spiritual immersion" I returned to London, treating myself to another three days chat on the way with my dear princess G. It was at this time I visited the Russian Uniat-Church with her, thus realising that ideal I mentioned when in the States. F

- "Goodbye, dear old London", I exclaimed that following summer. "You've not responded generously to my pioneering efforts, so I'm off to Ireland again." But I did not shake the dust off my feet; for I was too fond of dear old London, and had been happy there. I had arranged to spend this winter of 1928 teaching at the big school in that "secluded spot" in Waterford, (where, by the way, my Irish teacher friend of Moscow date had been brought up.) AS I was again "sur la branche" (a chronic condition) I had to take all my worldly belongings with me. For I knew not where the next branch for me to fly to would be.

Having deposited my goods at the Waterford College, I went straight to a hamlet, poetically called Mooncoin, across the Kilkenny border. Instead of a jaunting-car I made my entry in a donkey-cart this time. The whole village came out to see the great event - "A lady come all the way from London to teach us!", as they said. They put me up at the Post Office - a tumble-down shack with the snowiest of Irish linen on the grubbiest of beds. (I was told only fishermen slept there. I believed it.) To compensate for the primitiveness of it all, a kind Irish soul cared for my needs. How amused I was sitting at table in the dowdy little parlour with a magnificent salmon - "Expressly fished up for you dear" - in front of me, and a dog on each side resting its nose on my knee and looking longingly up into my face!

This out-of-the-way hamlet possessed one of the handsomest churches in the country. And why? Because of the parish priest's love for adorning the Sanctuary with handsome marble brought from Italy. I fear the music did not blend with the beauty of the marble. I had come to teach them harmony. It was a somewhat desperate task, ~~xxx~~ seeing there were only ten days in which to achieve it. However, enthusiasm and perseverance go a long way.

The following Sunday, the Sisters, I, and the organ sang a "Missa Cantata alla Gregoriana", with the result that the music showed its goodwill to become reconciled to the marble. The countryfolk had come from far and wide for the occasion. - "And did yer hear the beautiful Mass this morning?", asked one good soul of another, "and all in Irish too!" (Every word had been in Latin.) xxxxxxxxxxxx

Again I jogged through the village in the donkey-cart down to the station, and then entrained for Cork, where I was to give a course at the University.

The Sisters' guest-house beside the University grounds had been recommended me. Wending my way through these well laid-out gardens, I suddenly came upon a grim-looking wall with a sullen-faced entrance. - "Crumps!", methought, "this doesn't look very cheerful!" I was just going to knock, when lo, 'PRISON' caught my eye. I fled. Round the corner, fastened to a rustic gate, the words "La Retraite" smiled at me. In I went.

The place was full of Irish religious who had come up to follow the courses in Irish - a language made compulsory by the Free State for every

Irish teacher employed in the National Schools. The kind Mother Superior managed to provide a room for me, on condition I did not mind being the only "secular" there. I was only too thankful to be in this haven of rest, even if my bedroom DID look on to the prison walls (preferable to a slaughter-house, anyway.) Instead of squeals, at least there was dead silence.

Talking about the Irish language being compulsory, an amusing incident occurred during a demonstration I was giving on the Method with a class of children. It was the first lesson. I was trying to explain to a wee tot of five that number one was called "DO" and two "RE". {For this Method adopts numbers for notes as well as the staff notation.} The child seemed puzzled and unable to grasp this. A Sister came and explained to me that "dó" (pronounced Do) is the Irish word for the number 2. And there was I telling the child it meant No. 1. I gave it up.

That summer was extra hot. The poor Irish, not used to such heat, were collapsing and filling the hospitals. By way of relaxation, a scene out of Shakespeare's "As you like it" was prettily performed one evening in the open on the University Grounds by amateur artists for the delectation of the University students. (Relaxation for me was to come later on, and in a mighty unlooked-for way.) Meanwhile, <sup>a chance</sup> an unforeseen interview with another French Sister passing through brought me from Cork to the neighbourhood of Killarney. {I left without kissing the Blarney Stone.}

These Sisters possessed a fine property in the country. The convent had formerly been an old castle (the tower, plus ghost, being still intact) with new wings added on. The place was enhanced with small lakes, shady groves of ancient trees, and even the outline of a Druids' circle on one hillock. Their <sup>of the Sisters</sup> coming had been a boon to the whole neighbourhood.

Apart from the educational activities, they had a separate building where girls were taught to weave, design, and make garments for sale. A mill for sawing kept the boys and men busy.

Once when taking an evening stroll, I noticed what seemed to be <sup>a</sup> small gypsy camp on the roadside. I approached ~~xxxx~~ and found a poor old woman, <sup>and</sup> her grown-up son and daughter boiling water over a camp-fire. ~~xxxx~~ The old horse <sup>was</sup> grazing beside. They were anything but gypsies - just poor homeless folk wending their way to Cork. I gave them some help to get there alive. That night it rained hard. I was haunted by the thought of their lying out there on the ground, whilst I, selfish creature, was lying

<sup>some</sup> comfy in my bed - a state of affairs unpardonable in any Christian coun

The next morning I found them on the same spot. The old mother seemed in the last stages of bronchitis. - "People are very kind to us every-where", she said in that refined way innate in all the Irish, whether educated or not. - "I have nothing to complain of", she added, and this after spending a sopping night on a sackcloth under a cart! This little incident confirmed me still more in my conviction of the inherent refinement of manner and speech of the Irish poor and of their wonderful Faith <sup>(in spite of all the persecutions.)</sup> preserved throughout the centuries. Not that I am blind to their defects any more than I am to our own.

And now for the peep of that beauty spot - Killarney. Being so near it seemed a sin not <sup>to</sup> see it. The one drawback of that part of Ireland is the constant rain. Well, I just took my chance and started off. I was lucky. Minus a few drops it was the only fine day we had had for three weeks.

How can I describe the exquisite loveliness of those Three Lakes and that gem of a ruin - Muckross Abbey? Others have done this better. All I will say is that that drive round the Lakes, framed in the foliage of autumn tints, was one of the most beautiful I have ever revelled in. The kindly Irish driver who jogged us round told us all the legends of that romantic spot, <sup>(even pointing out the Devil's Tooth - a jagged rock still embedded in one of the Lakes.)</sup> The town of Killarney seemed more alert than most of those country places, <sup>due</sup>, presumably, to the frequent visitors.

The needle of my compass now pointed to Edinburgh, to complete my courses of the preceding year. On the way I spent two days in Dublin, thanks to having missed my boat-train. Here I met my dear Irish friend whose acquaintance I had first made in Moscow. She showed me the sights of the capital, <sup>(the Museum containing ancient Irish relics and trophies being particularly interesting)</sup>. Again we ended up with a chat of former times in a tea-room, <sup>as we did</sup> in London. Dublin impressed me as being less animated than I had expected. In fact, the Irish people seemed to me much less lively than I had always fancied them to be.

How often does <sup>one</sup> the enjoy <sup>de'minish</sup> the repetition of a good thing ~~less the second time!~~ <sup>through repetition!</sup> The lack of novelty and <sup>especially</sup> the absence of friends and pleasant associations accounts for this, perhaps. Edinburgh was just

the same beautiful city; but I relished my visit far less this time. A thunderbolt, however, came hurtling through the air from over the seas and bucked me up. It was a cablegram from New York announcing New Zealand wanted a Ward teacher to be sent out and asking me to go. (Evidently a wild shuffling of cards this time, and I had come out trumps.)

The bolt sent me reeling. It could not have chosen a more awkward moment to knock me down. I had always longed to go to that paradise; but not at a moment's notice. What about <sup>Erin</sup> Ireland and my plighted word? Headquarters had not realised this. However, that skyrocket brooked no dallying. The return one had been prepaid and was waiting to be discharged. <sup>So</sup> After taking advice I answered "yes", and immediately wrote both to <sup>Erin</sup> Ireland and New York explaining my quandary. To Ireland I owed my winter plans; to New York my eternal gratitude for giving me my life work. It took some time smoothing out matters at such a distance. But the "given word" is a point of honour. Headquarters thought so too. The Gordian ~~and~~ Knot was cut by New York sending a substitute - to the entire satisfaction of <sup>Erin</sup> Erin, England, and the States.

Instead of going via India to New Zealand, New York wished me to return for two months en route, so as to acquire all the latest developments of the work from the source. This meant embarking from San Francisco, or from Vancouver. But before I could embark from anywhere, I still had <sup>a</sup> ten days course to give in Leeds, all my luggage and books (strewn about <sup>Erin</sup> Erin) to collect, and that passport farce to go through. ~~SOME~~ job!, as the Americans would say.

Never will I forget that departure from London to Southampton. If only one could start off just as one is, instead of having to pack up ten million "indispensable" ~~(mind you)~~ things! Are you wealthy? Then all right. You can buy new things wherever you go. If you are not - well then, there you are! And sure enough, there I was, only just in time to jump on to the "SS.Olympic" before the gangway was removed, and sail away across the Atlantic with what remained of myself.

NEW YORK again.

Record XXVIII

My arrival at headquarters in New York was a sight worth coming over to see. After the tedious lengthy red tape formalities (~~ours are no-~~ thing in comparison), I bundled myself into a taxi with my trunks over-

head, and my 101 packages of books (used for the courses) strapped on the sides - front - back - everywhere and anywhere. You could hardly see the vehicle for all these bulging excrescences. I gasped as the driver shaved round the corners and dodged the traffic, wondering if he remembered the outgrowths behind him? But he showed a rare bump for minute calculation and deposited the whole show intact at the College gate.

An extremely interesting experience about this time was coming in contact with a wonderful musical invention called Tereminvox - named after its Russian inventor. This invention enables one to "pluck music out of the air", so to speak. Mr. Teremin, after giving demonstrations in Paris and London, had opened a studio in New York. A young Russian friend (now a professional player) once asked me to come there and accompany her <sup>on the piano.</sup> playing. I was "thrilled".

The actual musical instrument one plays on is the air, hence, invisible. All I remembered seeing was a modest-sized box on a stand containing the electric appliance. On the right end of the box was a short perpendicular rod. On the left a horizontal one. Amplifiers were supplied. The performer stood before the box, holding the right hand in front of the perpendicular rod and the left before the horizontal one - BUT NEVER TOUCHING EITHER OF THEM. To produce the sound, an electric button was pressed, and the current reacted on the rods (I presume); for instantaneously a loud note resounded, but ONLY if the hand was held up before the perpendicular rod.

To break the harshness of the sound <sup>right</sup> the hand had to be in a continual "tremolo" - just as when playing sustained notes on the violin or cello. The pitch was produced by varying the distance of the hand from the rod. This ethereal instrument was so exquisitely delicate, different shades of sound could be created, not to be obtained on any concrete instrument. The left-hand rod served to give the value to the notes by breaking the sound with a fillip of the fingers in the air, and also to produce the expression marks by raising and lowering the hand for the crescendo and diminuendo. And what feeling one COULD put into it! One's very soul. Played by a masterhand it must have bordered on the divine. (All I could produce was a thunderous noise which sent <sup>me</sup> everyone flying across the room.)

Mr. Teremin himself is a player. But I was told he spent his time in

scientific research for further improvements. So the results may now be still more marvellous.

Looking up my Cossacks was another welcome distraction during this interim of "absorbing the Method's latest developments." They had all disbanded, having obtained divers jobs in different directions. They were not well organised as the famous Don Cossack Choir was. Consequently, they found a steady, daily occupation more beneficial than the haphazard engagements upon which they had had till now to depend.

They said they expected to become American citizens at the completion of the prescribed number of years residence, and thus enjoy the rights of citizenship, instead of being political exiles for life. This was all very comprehensible and practical. But it seemed a strange, incongruous fate for those Cossacks - men from the wild mountainous regions of the Caucasus - to become mild citizens of New York! Such is the adaptability of the Slav nature.

My two months "absorbing" <sup>the latest developments in the Ward Method</sup> ended with a most interesting demonstration of the Method given by Mrs. Ward herself at the Damrosch Conservatoire of New York. These demonstrations of the young teachers and picked pupils under an expert hand, spelt fine art and wonderful skill. For the "creative work", one of the Conservatoire professors was asked to improvise a motif of a few notes on the piano. As he played them a young pupil took them down in numbers on the blackboard, developing the motif into a 36 measure melody as quick as she could write. Then two others came out and improvised the second and the third parts (all in silence, of course), and then the entire composition was sung straight off in three parts by the rest of the performers. The whole thing <sup>improvisation</sup> was harmonised so beautifully and so in keeping with the motif, a hearty, spontaneous applause expressed the Conservatoire's genuine surprise and admiration.

If the saying "no peace for the wicked" be true, I really must be an ARCHdemon. I <sup>occasionally</sup> sometimes feel like a teetotum as well - spinning round the globe, till I sometimes sit down - clutch my head - and exclaim - "Now, steady. Where AM I?" These were some of my thoughts as I felt myself being whirled across the vast stretches of Canada to Vancouver, <sup>for New Zealand</sup> ~~en route~~.

As my whole itinerary had been prepared for me ~~even~~ <sup>to</sup> the hotel-room in which I was to spend my one night in Vancouver, <sup>there</sup>, all I had to do was to sit down and let myself be wafted ~~to New Zealand~~. Luckily there



(Continuation of Footnote)-nying a pretty Hawaiian love-ditty was the only sound that greeted our ears, as we gazed in awe at the terrible grandeur of the panorama spread before us in that tragic spot.) *(Continue on page 138 in "The Hawaiian" ed.)*

In spite of the merry, happy-go-lucky atmosphere of Honolulu, <sup>no</sup> its ukeleles, <sup>with</sup> its bewitching languorous love-songs, Hawaii and the surrounding islands are still under the curse of leprosy; still reminiscent of the heroism of a Father Damien and of Molokai.

The next port - Suva, Fiji Islands - was the longest pull of all. When one is not a good sailor (nor an <sup>adept</sup> initiate in the "Coue" system), one becomes listless on boardship and also "bored" stiff. Meals seem to be the great event of the day. ~~Even this has no charm when one feels squæmish.~~ Fellow-travellers all seem to be journeying with their own relatives or companions, and so stick to their own little cliques. However, the crew, the attention, and the cleanliness of the whole ship were simply model. But the comfort ~~(not to speak of the luxury)~~ on the American liners is far superior. Besides, their fares for the same Class are not higher, and their speed is greater.

Three times did our engine (an oil-burner) break down in mid-ocean. - "You see it's this way", explained an old Salt. "This here boat was built on the Clyde. To day's the holy Sabbath, so she's just resting-like. A good Presbyterean, that she is."

As ~~much as~~ Honolulu was Americanized, so ~~much~~ was Suva stamped with the British cachet. There was this difference, however:- we did not ~~Angli-~~canise the Indians and Fijians there. They retained their national character intact. <sup>travellers</sup> Again I went for a sightseeing drive with my two pleasant Canadian ~~s~~ - minus garlands this time.

The scenery, though pretty, was not awe-inspiring as in Hawaii. The point of interest lay in visiting a small native village in the interior. The inhabitants were evidently used to visitors, for they spoke a few words of English, and one saw some common prints adorning, <sup>for rather mar-</sup>ring, the walls of their huts. A coal-black, spare, old man with a fakir countenance, struck one as an interesting type. He was a native of the Solomon Islands. - "You speak English?", I asked. He pondered awhile and then snapped out very clearly - "Not much". And that was all I got out of him. He spoke the truth.

The Fijians - in contrast to the Indians - are a stalwart race of darkies, whose heads were crowned with a massive halo of woolly hair.

Two magnificent types, dressed in their native police garb, stood sentinel at the entrance to the wharf.

The town of Suva could not boast of much. The attractive part lay in the pretty bungalows on the rising hills above. The red roof dominated everywhere. It was to dominate in New Zealand also.

Our departure was fêted in grand style. The bandmaster (a white man) of the Fijian Club, had boarded for New Zealand. So his sturdy pupils had mustered on the wharf to give us an appropriate farewell. They are a musical race and proved it for the occasion. They certainly did well. But their own native airs were more pleasing than their playing of our old hackneyed melodies.

The Indians, on the contrary, are not a musical nation, so one says. They also sang some of their own ditties to us. But they sounded more like a sad monotonous wail. And it was to this wail, wafted on the breeze, that our ship hove out of sight.

Yet another Christmas on board, celebrated right merrily in the John Bull way; yet a few more days of lazy hours - stretched out on deck-chairs watching the flying-fish fly (probably pursued by an enemy) in those shark-infested waters, and the long long voyage had come to an end. The first islands - like outposts - of lovely New Zealand appeared dimly on the horizon.

#### NEW ZEALAND, 1929.

##### Record XXIX

We all felt like Alice in Wonderland when she reached the bottom of her long fall, as we stepped on to the landing-wharf in Auckland harbour. The first sight of this lovely harbour, and also of Wellington's, confirms one's idea of the reputed beauty of New Zealand. My destination was Wellington, the present capital. After a hurried drive to different schools in <sup>Auckland</sup> ~~the town~~ and one night spent in the beautiful convent of the S.H., I left for Wellington the following evening, so as to arrive there for the New Year., 1929.

What an alarming night trip that was! I had never experienced such a wobbly express before - nearly as bad as boardship! The swaying was so violent one had to cling to the sides of the berth not to be hurled out. - "The cause are weights, madam", explained the civil guard, "fastened on to the carriages to keep their balance." - "H'm! Good thing the dark-

ness covers the reason for this "cause". Otherwise, it might be still more alarming," thought I. Yet when I took this same trip later on by daylight, it all seemed very mild, and I was very disappointed in the scenery. Like all good things, one must not expect to be bewitched by every inch of ground one covers.

Wellington, however, WAS bewitching. The prettiest part of that journey began as we approached the place. The whole town, except for the strip on the sea-level, lies tumbling about the hill-tops and sides, with the most gorgeous views and walks at every turn. New Zealand fulfilled expectations as far as scenery was concerned.

The business quarter of the city was not interesting as regards buildings. It never is. Italy spoils one for that. But I used to love exploring the residential parts of all the places I visited over there:- the dainty villas, each different in design and encircled in their exquisite gardens. As for the flowers, Dame Flora held an orgy year in year out; and all this magic beauty enhanced by the most limpid of skies and atmosphere!

My first abode was at the S.H. College in one of the numerous suburbs of the capital. When still at sea, a wireless message from these Sisters welcoming me to New Zealand had reached me. What a strange sensation these silent missives produce when received in mid-ocean!

The Christmas holidays being still on, I initiated my pioneering work by giving courses to the teaching religious, both in town and also at a place called Lower Hutt - a twenty minutes motor-drive along the principal bay. As soon as the schools opened, I set to work tackling them in turn. The children responded well. But I found them quieter, less demonstrative, and less quick to grasp things than the American and the Latin Youth.

Two months later saw me snugly ensconced in a small cottage on the pretty grounds of another school at Lower Hutt - called The Garden of Wellington. This cottage had formerly been a garage when the convent buildings had been a private villa. The Sisters had turned it into music-rooms. When I saw the cosy painting-den above, I fell in love with it. The kind Mother Superior had it transformed into a bedroom - with me tucked inside. The trouble was the lack of water (and I a would-be mermaid!) Behold me then descend my castle steps armed with a jug and

a pail and making for the garden pump. For this was a country of "help yourself", as is the case in all the Dominions. When nature poured water on my head as well from the skies, it became rather awkward.

My only companion at night was an opossum. This little brute used to scare the wits out of me by parading the roof just over my bed with ~~creaky~~ creepy, stealthy steps every night. Moonlight was his preference. I kept my eyes glued to the open window; for he was an expert climber, and such a Romeo was not to my taste. Only once did I welcome the little wretch. That was when the whole house was swaying and creaking to the rhythm of an earthquake. He scuttled up and down overhead, probably in token of his sympathy ~~for mine~~.

Earthquakes are the only curse of New Zealand. Otherwise the fair isle would be too perfect, I suppose, and we would ~~hanker~~ <sup>sigh</sup> no more for another paradise. These "quakes" were pretty frequent during my stay there. Hardly a week passed without some tremors; ~~for~~ Wellington lay in the earthquake zone. I was to experience another severe shock later on further away.

Meanwhile, I was rushing about the schools in and out of Wellington, teaching eight or nine classes a day, and trying to make headway in all of them. It was desperate work in some respects. For unless the teacher is trained up to the point, she simply cannot impart this Method. The ear is the instrument one has to play on. This means practising on it - as on any other instrument - to attain efficiency, which, of course, exacts the necessary time.

Yes, this arch-enemy "TIME"! The poor Sisters were already so over-worked, <sup>that</sup> only keen enthusiasm and a true spirit of sacrifice (for instance giving up their holidays) could make them possibly find time for any extras. But the enthusiasts and those who fully appreciated the value of the Method, still found that "where there is a will there is a way."

Anything new and progressive - especially in the educational line - will always encounter a certain amount of antagonism. Ignorance, prejudice, and self-complacency are the cause of this. Even good souls unwittingly play the devil's role in this <sup>respect</sup> regard.

The masses of the children the world over are absolutely ignorant of the very first elements of musical theory, and their ears <sup>are</sup> quite untrained, thanks to that senseless system of teaching everything by rote.

Songs drummed into their ears by endless repetition are all they know in the musical line. Exception must be made for that minority which has the means of taking private tuition, thus obtaining a chance of getting their ears trained for sightreading, and also a little knowledge of the scientific part of music, and not only the mechanical.

Thank goodness, educationalists are waking up to the fact that music is not a luxury, nor simply an "extra" to be squeezed into the scholastic programme; but rather to be considered as important a factor as any other subject in the child's education. The next step forward will be to obtain more time for it, be it at the expense of dropping some other less necessary subject.

Time passed very quickly. The climate in the North Island being fairly even, there was not much difference in the seasons. The flora and the birds seemed to ignore them completely and ran riot the whole year round. The reversing of the seasons seemed strange at first. Again one felt like "Alice" with all this topsy-turv<sup>y</sup>ness. Why, I even caught the moon going the wrong way one night!

As for the flowers you never saw the like elsewhere. Their profusion, size, and colouring were simply dazzling. But they had less perfume and withered quicker than in Europe. The bush with its lovely, graceful fern-tree is the most characteristic part of the flora. You can explore the length and breadth of it and never come across any offensive animal or insect. The snakes above all are taboo - thanks to St Patrick's crosier! For when that venerable patriarch chased these reptiles away from Holy Erin (so the good Irish folk relate), his pastoral staff pierced right through the globe into New Zealand (~~lying at the antipodes of Ireland~~) with the same beneficent result. I was to enjoy a good peep of the bush in my further wanderings. These started in with the coming year - my second in Wellington.

The tour of giving courses began with the town of Wanganui, on the Wanganui River. Parts of this river are also beauty-spots of the island; but not at the point where the town lies. The grand scenery of Wellington had already spoilt one. Wanganui was disappointing. There was something in the air too which made even the boys and small children sleepy. The only time one saw the former alive and alert was when a football-match

was on. Sport reigns as supreme in New Zealand as it does at home. (The British team out from England happened to be touring the <sup>North</sup> N. Island just then.) My courses over, I began introducing the work in all the surrounding parish schools.

It was here I experienced my second ~~vixxent~~ shock of earthquake. About 10 o'clock one morning (fortunately the recreation hour for the children) I was talking to a Sister. Suddenly a weird ominous sound was heard, followed by a violent swaying of the whole building. - "Earthquake!", ejaculated the Sister, and seizing my arm rushed me into the open. Here the earth began wobbling under our feet. The whole performance had taken us so unawares and with such lightning speed, we did not fully realise the gravity of it all. We certainly would have, had television enabled us to see the tragedy being enacted that very moment on the West coast of the South Island. Two or three small towns there were ruined and lives lost. Thank God, the "quake" was not repeated - only daily tremors ensuing and a few chimneys tumbling down.

Having completed my allotted work, (and with such a sensational end!) I took leave of the good Sisters, their fine school on the hill-top, their beautiful grounds, and all their kind hospitality. My next halt was at New Plymouth on the west coast, a town renowned for its handsome Pukekera Park. The daily programme here was a repetition of the one in Wanganui, and as it had to be in nearly all my pioneering work. The same ground covered, the same appreciation of the work, the same simplicity and kind hospitality - always giving of its best, no matter how modest the means or surroundings.

New Zealanders shine for their courtesy and refinement. Vulgarity seems to be an unknown blemish with them. Being a young country, a democratic spirit pervades all, (as in Canada and in Australia.) Everybody is treated on a par. Work is the ruling genie, and every trade and profession is equally esteemed. They are also very generous, kindhearted, and the quintessence of honesty. But like every nation, they have their defects. Who hasn't? I found them very reserved, conservative, and unemotional; somewhat obstinate, and naively self-complacent. One also missed that bright responsiveness and vivacity of spirit inherent in the Latin races.

This undemonstrativeness of character was brought home very forcibly

once when I was witnessing a fire. The crowd quietly looked on at the firemen. Not a sound was heard but the crackling of the blaze and the swish of the water. Only once was the silence broken by a mild chuckle, when the firemen switched the hose, whilst adjusting it, on to the crowd. Had the audience been of southern blood instead of "nordic", many other sounds would have been heard as well.

Having again wound up my programme with the initiation of the Method <sup>Justice Ward</sup> into the surrounding country schools (where I came across the Polish name "Dombrovski" of Harbin reminiscence), I passed on to a small place called Stratford. This spot is associated with the more renowned name of Mount Egmont - a beautiful mountain rising up serenely in all its solitary glory.

The Maori legend explains its isolation thus:-

In the long long ago, another mountain (now seen in the distance) was the friend of Mount Egmont and adjoined her. But one day they quarrelled and separated - hence the present plain between. However, as they intend making peace some day and so unite again, no Maori will live in that plain, for fear of being squashed at the moment of reconciliation! {And, in fact, you will not meet one living there.} The Mountain is clothed in bush with a cap of snow adorning its head in winter. We went through part of the bush and saw the Dawson Falls ~~(called after their discoverer.)~~

And now for the memorable drive across country to the good-sized town of Hamilton further north. It was a whole day trip by motor. I revelled in the scenery for the greater part. But give me a train for revelling in another time, please. At least you can move about in it and stretch your limbs, instead of being cramped up on a seat by the hour. Also you do not feel every stone you go over and every zigzag of the road, till your head is spinning round like a top (and your inside <sup>as well.</sup> ~~with it.~~)

The New Zealand tourist drivers are extremely reliable and prudent in their driving. They need to be, seeing how narrow and steep the mountain roads are, and <sup>no</sup> (never any) railings to prevent taking headers down the precipitous sides. If accidents happen, it is nearly always the fault of the reckless private driver. Sure enough, if we did not meet one of these inconsiderate demons, and just at one of the thousand hairpin-bends! Luckily for us our car was the inside one. But we did not care to shoot the demon off (as he deserved) into the precipice yawning below. So we just crashed

into the precipice

into the mountain side - the only alternative - sustaining small damage. The demon dashed on without even thanking us, as these wretches always do.

The sight of the luxuriant growth of the bush all down the steep mountain sides with the myriads of graceful waving ferntrees was truly wonderful. Only once were we allowed breathing space and refreshment at a wayside inn. When we arrived towards evening at a pretty place called <sup>Te Kuiti</sup> Tikuiti I collapsed in a hotel and spent the night trying to unfreeze and untwist myself from the coils of that endless spin. The following day I went to see the magic glowworm cave in the vicinity.

Several of these stalagmite grottoes with subterranean pools have been discovered in that neighbourhood. But the mysterious part are the glowworms. Their luminosity is ~~not phosphorescent~~ <sup>under control</sup>; for they extinguish their light at will. Their existence also runs in a cycle, passing through the chrysalis stage and ever returning to life again. Our visit to them was quite impressive. We had to ~~carefully~~ <sup>carefully</sup> thread our way down through several slippery passages in the wake of our guide, who explained "alla cicerone" all the wonders of the surrounding fantastic formations created by the stalagmites and the stalactites.

The actual glowworm-cave was in the nethermost depths of all. And what a fairyland we beheld! Myriads of these little insects attached to the roof of the grotto and emitting a soft opalescent light which illuminated the whole cavity. Gossamer-like filaments were hanging down towards the pool below. Whenever a mosquito got entangled in one, down ran the glowworm and devoured it. Dead silence had to be maintained throughout; for <sup>at</sup> the slightest sound the little beasts extinguish their lanterns.

It really was most romantic gliding along in a boat across the dark waters in that creepy silence and with that magic, soft radiance above. An occasional bump from a stalactite overhead soon brought us to our senses again. And also brought me a few hours later to my destination - <sup>Hamilton.</sup> Hamil

Here I repeated my usual programme, winding up with a two days fling at the wonder-spot - Rotorua. But more of this later on; ~~when~~ I spent two never-to-be-forgotten weeks there.

RECORD XXX

*in Europe*

Early autumn (early spring with us) of 1930 saw me back in my little den at Lower Hutt. Here I renewed my busy life with the schools through-

out the ensuing winter. Spring (our autumn) saw me flying off again to Napier, on the east coast. Two interesting phases of my work awaited me there, namely, teaching a school of Maori girls, and also a Seminary of students. It was my very first contact with Maoris, as far as teaching them went. I was delighted.

The Maoris are one of the most musical, refined, ex-savage races on earth. Their art (minus the tattooing) and native dress are of the most becoming. The former is fast dying out, and the latter donned only for occasions - thanks again to the influence of civilization.

These Maori girls turned out my best pupils. Their ear for music was acute and so true. No singing out of tune with them! Though their vocal production was somewhat throaty, there was a softness of tone quality rarely heard in ours. When they did the rhythmic movements of the Gregorian chironomy - ah, then they were in their element and would willingly have gone on forever. This came naturally to them, seeing that they accompany their own native songs with the rhythmic swaying of their bodies and limbs. And what pretty, sad melodies they are ~~too~~ - all to be heard on records now.

I was told, however, that the real original Maori music could not be interpreted by our notation, because the range of their scale included fractional sounds non-existent in ours. Even some of the New Zealand birds are unique songsters. They sing in parts and actually keep time! Had their ditties not been printed in a book compiled by a Danish musician (who lived twenty years in the <sup>New Zealand</sup> N.Z. bush to obtain them) one might have doubted this phenomenon.

Well, these Maori girls gave me a gala concert when I left. They could not have given me anything more to my taste, except, perhaps, a Maori costume - which would have been asking too much. The feather-coat garment, for instance, is now so rare, it has become an heirloom, and is presented only to royalty when on a visit (e.g. to the Prince of Wales.)

The concert lasted an hour and a half and was accompanied with the rolling of eyes and the protruding of tongues - in token of friendship and respect for the fêted one. (Otherwise, it denotes defiance.) Thank goodness they did not want to rub noses with me as well - the Maori form of shaking hands. But the leader did present me with a pretty hairband she

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had made, and also a pair of "poi-poi" balls, This hairband is worn across the forehead and fastened behind the head, thus keeping their thick, wavy long tresses becomingly in place. The "poi-poi" balls (made like the hairbands - from some carefully prepared grass) are attached to a string and are used for their rhythmic movements in their "poi-poi" dances and songs, the most charming being the Canoe-song.

The Sister told me these girls were capable of any manual work whatsoever; but not much disposed for anything mental. The Maori is lazy by nature. As with all native races, there are many halfcaste among them, some being quite fair and with Scotch blood in their veins!

The other interesting phase of work was giving a Gregorian course to the students in the Seminary some way out in the countryside. This meant more advanced work, as they were already proficient in sight-reading the Plain Chant. Alas, when the awful earthquake three months later had laid fair Napier in ruins, six or seven - if not more - of these poor young students were crushed to death, as well as other pupils of mine. The tragic news stunned us all. Little did we then suspect how near death was. Do we ever? Especially when given no warning as in an earthquake.

Napier was one of the most alluring of the seaside resorts. Part of the town was on the sea-level, with a fine esplanade - "quite British", you were informed. The rest was built climbing up and down the hills - so often the case in New Zealand. In fact, many of the pretty bungalow-villas seemed to be clutching desperately to the hillsides, or else just hanging on in mid-air. (Rather giddy business looking out of the windows!) How many survived the earthquake, I wonder? Even the school I was staying in was perched on a steep hill-top. When toiling up it, you dared not look down for fear of losing your balance. This feeling pursued you everywhere in <sup>new</sup> Zealand. But the glorious view from the summit compensated for all. Those were a happy, unforgettable six weeks.

Another two months back in my cosy den at Lower Hutt, followed by a three weeks "teaching-visit" to another charming place called Masterton (full of flowery gardens and running rills) and behold me transferring my seat of operations to Auckland, former capital and my first landing<sup>place.</sup> ✓

Instead of a "cosy den", I was now enthroned in a convent-school beautifully situated on a height overlooking the harbour, with the graceful outline of an extinct volcano lying in the sea just opposite. At

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night the illuminated ferry-boats plying their way across the harbour to the shores on the other side was fairy-like. The whole panorama was charming. But the scenery was less imposing and not so grand as at Wellington. (I did not get the chance of visiting all the surroundings, especially the famous islands, so cannot judge <sup>over</sup> too much.)

One thing, however, was detestable, and that was the climate. Wellington was bad enough with its incessant wind. But at least it was dry and healthy - the Sanatorium of N<sup>ew</sup> Zealand. ~~But~~ Here the air was simply dripping with the damp, and so heavy, it affected one's breathing at first. In summer the heat was so muggy the whole building was perspiring - watery streaks trickling down the walls. This was due partly, perhaps, to the amount of water all round, - ~~Auckland being the narrowest point of both North and South Island.~~ (The Americans' cutely ask - "Where do the New Zealanders go when the tide is in?")

The new school-part of the building was in imitation of the old Spanish monastic style exteriorly and equipped up-to-date interiorly. (It brought <sup>one</sup> a whiff of Italy.)

My new era began well. And so did my gallivantings. Hardly had I started in with my schools when I was switched off again to a country place nearby called Pukekohe <sup>(- an important farming district.)</sup> (These Maori names sound very funny and seem impossible to remember. But, like everything, they bide their time.) Here I gave a course to a college of girls in their "teens" and destined to be future teachers.

A few miles further up the road I gave another one to another lot of male youngsters in "teens", and also preparing for the same fate. One of these latter used to meet me in the village and trundle me and my load of books up to the school in a nondescript sort of vehicle called the "Black Maria". This creature went in for jibbing and snorting, and only with persuasion did we finally reach the summit of that stony, rutty hill. Altogether it was great fun, except for the poor sheep <sup>which</sup> ~~whom~~ Black Maria scared senseless.

It was at Pukekohe I discovered the whereabouts of the Russian couple with whom I had lived in Harbin, China. They had then told me of their hopes of getting to N<sup>ew</sup> Zealand some day and going in for farming. So I was not oversurprised when I heard they were in the neighbourhood. The question was how to get at them; for they were rather out-of-the-way. A friend of

the Sisters kindly motored me there.

Never shall I forget that meeting - so much did it impress me. It was about five o'clock in the evening - the busy milking hour. By dint of frequent enquiries at farmhouses we succeeded in dislodging our prey. No house ~~house~~ was visible. Only barbed wire, three wild dogs barking ferociously at us, and about 100 cows solemnly wondering what all the row was about. We did not feel like tackling any of these three obstacles. And yet it seemed absurd not to attain my goal - standing here at the very gate after thirteen years separation!

My companion suggested tooting. We did. An object approached. - "It's she", whispered my companion. I stared. The object smiled at me and greeted me by name. Could this possibly be the beautiful, fashionable woman I had left in Harbin thirteen years ago, now bungled up in "togs", her hair shingled, and the hardships of her rustic life written on her face? Yes, it was, And I had to believe it.

A few friendly <sup>words</sup> exchanged, and we left. For she was in the middle of milking her 100 cows - (and I was in for "a brown study".) - "Vae victis!", rang in my ears, as we motored away.

Later on, when we were able to meet in town and ~~and~~ spend the day together, she was not disguised in "togs". Gradually I discerned the fine woman again I had known in China, and admired her all the more for her moral grit and stamina. She did not complain of her lot, but was full of hope for the future of her son. When she first arrived in New Zealand, I heard she went straight to a land agent. - "Sir, take my jewels and give me land", she exclaimed in her broken English, spreading out her jewels before the astounded clerk! (Tableau!)

Now let's hasten and get to the grand Finale - the wonderland Rotorua. (For I see this Record is the last one and will not bear much more playing.) My last pioneering tour through a town called Thames, surrounded by fine scenery leading to the Coromandel coast, <sup>then on</sup> and ~~to~~ pretty Te Aroha (a miniature Rotorua with its hot and cold mineral springs) finally landed me at this magic spot. I had caught a glimpse of it on a preceding tour - enough to whet my appetite for more. And now I was to feast on it for two grand weeks! A school there procured me this royal banquet.

Rotorua makes herself seen and smelt through steam and sulphur everywhere - even <sup>at a</sup> in the distance. It seemed so strange to walk along the

road with streams of boiling water running on either side. You had to be careful walking about certain parts not to tumble into a hot <sup>and</sup> watery grave, as occasionally happens. Nature has left the white residential section of the town in peace till now. But who knows for how long? The hot mineral baths and swimming-pools are enclosed in the "Domain", the temperature of the water being regulated. How enjoyable were those daily hot swims in the open, and this in midwinter with frost outside! For Rotorua lies on high plainland. The water has a velvety touch, and the minerals it contains ensure you from catching cold.

The Maori Quarter Ohinemutu lies right on the Lake Rotorua. It has a pretty Protestant Maori church adorned with Maori tapestries and carving, and also a Catholic Church kept by the Dutch Missionary Fathers. The site was so charming it seemed nearly worth while being ill to be able to stay in that hospital above commanding that perfect view. Oh, the fascination of walking down there in the evenings exploring the village with its small geysers and pools, and <sup>in</sup>reveling the radiant sunsets!

Every village has its meeting-house - a good-sized wooden hall with its fantastic, carved entrance, and beams and woven tapestries inside. The aristocrats among the Maoris stick a feather in their hair when wearing their native garb. The wealthier members have prettily carved huts with a display of all their Maori treasures inside - sometimes marred by incongruous European objects, such as a washing-stand, etc. These huts <sup>These huts</sup> They seem to keep <sup>only</sup> for show, living in some side-hovel themselves.

Once my eye caught sight of a miniature golf-links on which tiny geysers were playing. - "How can you play golf with those geysers in the way?" I asked of a Maori youth carving in his workshop. - "Oh, those geysers just act as the obstacles", he replied.

The other Maori village, or "Pa" in Maori language, was Whakarewarewa - shortened to "Whaka" by the uninitiated. It was about a twenty minutes brisk walk inland from Rotorua. This "Pa" was much more extensive and alarming than Ohinemutu. Turbulent, enormous geysers, seething mud-pools, boiling lakes, covered this area. The Maoris, who love heat, actually build their huts over this wholesale agitation. (They are fatalists and say - "What will be, will be.") One sees the steam rising from under them. And one also sees these heat-lovers walking out of their huts straight into the hot water for their morning dip, whilst their kettle boils in some

higher temperature nearby. They also cook their meat and vegetables in a specially prepared underground hole, - the results being more satisfactory than cooking by fire, because of the more <sup>even</sup> equal temperature.

The Pohutu Geyser is one of the highest in the world, but also one of the most capricious. Though always steaming, it will sulk for long periods. <sup>"Why"</sup> it would not even play for the Prince of Wales, our guide told us, (and, of course, still less for me.) The boiling mud-pools were most creepy with their repulsive sound of "blopp blopp". These "blopps" took fantastic shapes. In one pool they formed perfect poached eggs. In another, the human eye. Then again, leaping frogs. And in one even assumed the appearance of roses and lilies. What a fascinating <sup>inferno</sup> hell it all was!

But to get a still more vivid idea of the Lower Regions, one had to go to Tikitere some miles further away. At "Whaka" there were happy human beings about enjoying the hot place. But here there was only fire, brimstone, and universal desolation. Well might Dante's inscription - "Lasciate ogni speranza voi che entrate" (Abandon all hope ye who enter) have been written above the entrance to this Inferno.

As it was, the word HELL greeted one on the threshold. Further up "The Devil's Inkpot" (a seething cauldron of black mud), and "The Devil's Rocking-chair" (a wobbly ledge overhanging the Inkpot) assured us we were now well in his domain. Not a living nor green thing visible. Everything petrified - even the branches of dead skeleton shrubs, - and stifling, sulphurous fumes belching forth on all sides. Such was the charming panorama that met our scared gaze, as we gingerly followed in the footsteps of our guide. To cheer us up, this Maori "Cicerone" related how a party crossing the very rickety bridge (we also were crossing that very moment) had disappeared into the "Inkpot", and that this might be our fate too. It was not, thank Providence,

Another Inferno was Wairakei. But at least it was a more cheerful one. <sup>For</sup> There was water and verdure to break the spell of terror all around. To get there one had to motor across endless miles of volcanic soil with just one mountain - called Rainbow Mountain, because of its bright variegated strata - to relieve the monotony. Wairakei itself is limited to a small area within a narrow valley. I was told that the earth's thinnest crust was focussed at this point. I believed it. It was the most disturb-

ing walk I ever took. The very ground was alive. Terrific geysers-- far above boiling point - roared on every side, making the earth tremble with their thunder; steaming torrents and cascades poured down and rendered every footstep slippery; spooky, squeaky, gurgly sounds issued from under one's very feet as one stood there in awe before nature's convulsions. One steaming waterfall was forming pink terraces, in imitation of the world-famous buried ones. A clean mud-pool further on was busy making soft skin cosmetics. Next to it were two translucent emerald pools - one cold, the other boiling (an unfathomable secret of nature.) And beautiful verdure on the brink of both cold and boiling water everywhere!

Some of the geysers played at regular intervals. Others one had to dodge to escape a scalding douche. (I did, with the rest of the party following on my heels.) In fact, it was the the liveliest, most nightmarish stroll of my life.

On the return trip we cooled off all this ebullition watching the Huka Falls and the Aratiatia Rapids of the Waikato River - the most sparkingly transparent water ever beheld. We also passed a steaming roadside pool where the ducks hovering above laid hardboiled eggs! <sup>driver informed us!</sup> ~~so she~~

Another sensational, unforgettable all-day outing was the so-called Round Trip to the Waikato Valley and neighbouring Lakes. Motoring, walking, ferrying, made this trip less wearisome than the one to Wairakei. What a drive that was across those volcanic heights, with that panorama ever unfolding before our eyes! On one summit we alighted and refreshed ourselves with tea at the inn. Then came a walk through the valley with the biggest sheet of boiling water in a crater on the opposite side. Stray cattle were grazing about. (I suppose they had had to acquire a taste for hot mineral water, poor brutes!) Suddenly our path opened out on to lovely Lake Rotomahana, and a motor-launch ferried us across.

This lake having been formed by volcanic disturbances the water is boiling - cooling down towards the centre. The surrounding cliffs perspired clouds of steam. It was there those exquisite world-famed White and Pink Terraces existed. The terrific eruption of the volcano Tarawera ruined and buried them in 1886. We passed the site and saw the strange lava formations which now cover them. (How cruel and wanton Nature is at times!)

Having gained the opposite shore, another attractive walk awaited us over the hill and landed us on the shores of Lake Tarawera. Yes, There was that monster of a volcano towering above in the distance and looking so harmless and innocent - the DEMON! Not a whiff of smoke was visible. This lake appeared less beautiful than Lake Rotomahana.

Our motorcar was awaiting us at the landing and drove us back. Thus ended another "perfect day". (Many interesting accounts have been written of the history of this corner of the globe and its poetic Maori lore.)

The third trip I treated myself to was that of the Seven Lakes (a very soothing one after the others) with beautiful peeps of the bush leading from one lake to the other. One precipitous hairpin bend was called Poison Point - for "one drop" was enough.

Rotorua will always haunt my affections, in spite of the all-pervading smell of non-fresh (shall I say rotten?) eggs, and the agitated state of her soil (this latter condition, on the contrary, being the cause of all her fascination.) However, my time was up (if only I could have taught that school forever!), and I had to tear myself away. But not before I had taken leave of the Maori Siren by going to one of her farewell concerts and letting myself be carried away by the rhythm of her "Poi-poi" dances and the lilt of her "Canoe-songs".

With a hearty shake from Mother Earth, and a sudden, gushing outburst from Mr. "Pohutu" (both evidently agitated at my departure), plus a warm, misty embrace from the silent mysterious steam all around, I bid this bewitching corner of the British Empire a wistful -

" H A E R E - R A ! "

*Epilogue*  
Here ends my lengthy odyssey and long long rigmarole. I have no more Records to play for the present. My Australian one is still in the making. So - Farewell! May the playing of these Records of *fiends* <sup>fiends</sup> Concords and Discords have given pleasure both to travel and music-~~fiends and~~ lovers.

F I N I S.