



NO. 6

FEATURING WORKS BY

SOPHIE KROPOTKIN

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It is an unfortunately common experience to find, while researching some one of the more-or-less well-known male figures in anarchist history, some glimpses of wives, daughters, sisters, lovers or female comrades who have barely left a mark in the historical record. In the case of Sophie Ananiev, the wife of Peter Kropotkin, we are fortunate to have a small, but diverse selection of works which have been translated into English.

# SOPHIE KROPOTKIN

## THE WIFE OF NUMBER 4,237

The train had just arrived at the station of N----, an out-of-the-way place on one of the branches of the South-Eastern system. The few travellers alighted—three men and a woman—and stood on the platform, waiting till the way was deal- to cross to the other side and make their way out.

The men belonged in the vicinity and knew each other. They talked together, while the woman—a young brunette, thin and poorly dressed in black—stood apart, leaning on the railing. Her eyes roved over the surrounding country and seemed to seek the object of her journey.

On the right and the left she saw gently-sloping hills covered with forests; before her, a large plain, covered with meadows, clumps of trees, green fields which ran up the hillsides and outlined themselves in emerald green on the dark background of the forests of fir-trees. A rivulet wound through the plain. One would have said that it had imposed on itself the task of visiting each of the farm-houses whose roofs glistened in the sunlight, carrying to each the freshness of its limpid waters. Then it entered a shaded defile, between other hills, and disappeared in the bluish mists of the morning.

Meanwhile, the train had lazily moved on; the way was clear, and the travellers could leave. Once outside, they dispersed in various directions.

The new arrival gave them time to get away; then she approached a peasant in a blue blouse, who was lighting his pipe, and asked him the way to the central prison.

“Only keep to this road lined with lindens, you will not miss it,” said the peasant, while he examined with a scrutinizing look the troubled features of the young woman. “As soon as you have passed the copse on the right, you will see a great wall: that is the external wall. Follow that, it will lead you to the entrance.

“You come to see some one in prison?” ventured he.

“Yes.”

“A relative, doubtless?”

“Yes, sir.”

And she hurried to gain the designated road, quickening her pace.

The peasant followed her with his look. He thought for a moment of overtaking her and talking a little as they walked together; but she was already far away. He shook his head, and went into the cafe at the station.

The woman walked very fast. Whether it was emotion or the sharpness of the morning air, she shivered under her woollen dress; but she did not think to put on a knit neck-handkerchief which she carried in her hand with a little wicker basket.

The wind brought her the perfumed air of meadows and trees which were hastening to profit by a late spring-time to expand their foliage. The copse on the right sent her by puffs the penetrating odor of young fir-trees.

“Oh how good it is here!” she exclaimed, taking deep breaths of the pure air of the beautiful morning. She admired the fields, the meadows, the rapid

waters of the stream which flowed by the side of the road. "What limpid water!" she thought; "all around endless forests; this is real country!"

And, full of admiration, she involuntarily slackened her steps. After the infectious air of the suffocating streets of the great city, after the dust of the work-shop, the country had so much more charm for her; and she breathed with all her lungs. In the face of nature, she forgot for a moment her troubles.

A gold-finch was pouring forth his morning song in the thicket, and the young woman had already taken a few steps to one side to discover the little singer, when she perceived behind the trees an immense gray wall which rose before her.

Formidable, sombre, this mass of stone extended quite beyond her view, running through the valley and climbing the hill. A whole world, speechless, stupefied, stagnated within its enclosure.

The flash of cheerfulness which had kindled for a moment in the large eyes of the poor woman was extinguished instantly at the sight of this mass of stone.

"He is there, behind this wall," she said to herself; "he never sees the water or the verdure; nothing of all this exists for him." And she rushed along the road, accelerating her steps, forcing herself by a rapid walk to stifle the sobs ready to shake her breast.

"He must not see me weep," she stammered; "it would trouble him too much: he could never bear my tears."

But the rebellious tears ran over her cheeks; they fell on her breast, slipping over her dress, dispersing in little drops. She hurried along to stifle them under a powerful effort of the will.

"How long it is, this wall!" She had been following it twenty minutes, and she could not see the end.

At last she saw the buttresses, an embrasure, and the vaulted door—the only egress of this formidable masonry. The young woman wiped her eyes, dried them with her handkerchief, and entered a vast court. However, she had not yet reached the prison, they told her. The prison! she could not see it, for there were two more walls to clear before reaching the prisoners' quarters. She must ring at a second door-way, and apply at the clerk's office.

Trembling, she crossed the threshold of the door which had just been indicated to her, and spoke at last to a guard.

"Would you be willing to tell me, sir, to whom I ought to apply to see my husband . . . Jean Tissot," added she, blushing and presenting her marriage certificate.

"To the director, madam. He is away today, but there is his substitute."

"Can I see him at once?"

"In a quarter of an hour he will return from the pretorium; I will give him your papers. Wait here on the bench."

The quarter hour, the half hour passed,—the wife of a prisoner is accustomed to waiting,—and seated on a bench in a sombre ante-room, the young woman tried to recall all that she had to say to her husband. So many things, and the interview is so short,—hardly a half hour!

How many times, lying in her attic, had she not repeated all that she would say to him; each word had engraved itself in her memory, and now she had forgotten everything . . .

"I shall tell him first how I love him,—infinitely, more now than before; if I still live, it is only for him.

"He must know nothing of all I have suffered during these eighteen months; I work, I am well . . . my rent is paid . . . what else? I have forgotten everything; why did I not write it all on a scrap of paper?"

The thread of her thought was broken; she asked herself in what condition she would find him.

"Eighteen months since I saw him! They say that they are poorly fed, that they have to work much too hard. He will be pale, he will have that cadaverous look that I have seen in the prisoners at the jail."

She shudders at this idea, but a moment after she sees already her Jean happy, the smile—that good smile—on his lips, when they have announced to him that his little Julie is there, that he is going to see her immediately; and she feels happy at the thought of having brought him a moment of happiness.

How he expected her for the New Year!

And she mentally reread this letter. She knew it by heart, this letter which he had written her on learning that he would not see her.

She had them, nevertheless,—the hundred francs necessary for the voyage. She had been saving for a whole year on her salary of forty-two *sous* a day. A whole year of privations, during which she refused herself everything, stinting herself in food and in fire which she lighted so rarely in winter. Yes, she had them in December, when that terrible sickness came to spoil all her plans.

"A simple gash, a finger cut with a silk thread, and what horrible suffering! I thought I should die; what is it that they put in this silk to make people suffer so much? More than a month lost, and how the money was eaten up! ... It was all to begin over again!"

Meanwhile the director has returned: a man lean, dry, still young, who has not even condescended to give a look to the visitor, in going to his office. There is a going and coming of guards; they have gone to look for the head guard.

"A minute more," the poor woman thinks; and she resumes her place on the bench. Every time they open a door, she believes she will see her husband.

At least, the interview will not take place under the same conditions as at the jail. A shudder seizes her at the recollection of those men put in a cage like wild beasts.

"But the beasts have only one grating, and there they have two, more than a yard apart. No way of touching even a finger. Two gratings, a mesh of iron wire, and a guard between us! Perfect darkness t I could not even see his features. Five men in each cage, ten women and children before them! The women weeping, the men screaming as loud as they can to make themselves heard in the uproar of the calls of the guards, of raps on doors, of a hundred men and women talking at once under one vault,—what a hell!"

"Come this way, madam, the director wishes to speak with you," said a guard.

She enters the office.

A tall man, with hard features, glassy eyes and blonde mustache, receives her standing, speaking to the chief guard:

"You are sure it is Number 4,237? in the hospital quarter? That is the one! Sick? Can he not go down to the *parloir*?"

"No, sir."

"Madam, your husband is sick, in the infirmary. You cannot see him for some days yet."

"Sick? What is the matter with him?" cries the poor woman. "But then I will go to the infirmary!"

She is almost content to escape this horrible *parloir*.

"Impossible. Absolutely impossible! It is contrary to the rules. The law is the same for all: a woman never enters the prisons. You will see him when he is well again."

"But I come from a long distance, sir; I can stay here only a few days."

"He need not have got into prison! This is the rule; I can do nothing about it. No interview till he can go down to the *parloir*."

"I beg you, sir .... Is he seriously ill? What is the matter?"

"Inflammation of the chest, vomiting of blood,—or something or other of that sort."

"But if he could only see me, oh! you would see how that would give him strength . . . He is sick because he has not seen me for so long a time, . . . he will recover" . . .

"I have already told you, madam, that it is impossible. What do you want me to do about it? It is contrary to the rules."

"My Jean, my dear one! . . . If you only knew how he loves me; I am everything to him . . . What must I do, tell me, in order to get permission? But it is my husband, sir, and I, his wife, have not the right to see him? .... What, have we done, then, that they should make us suffer so much?"

The sobs broke her voice; a cry of pain escaped from this feeble breast.

The director knew not what to say: he pulled his mustache impatiently. The head guard—a man with gray hair, hardened by a long service, but who rarely had business with women—fixed his eyes on the director's embroidered cap thrown on the table.

"The rules are opposed to it. . . the law . . . the law for all," stammered the director.

Then he took refuge in his office.

The woman remained alone with the head guard; she went toward him.

"Sir, you are a father, you ought to understand me . . . You have, perhaps, a daughter married . . . Who knows, if one day . . . Jean is also an honest man . . . I beg you, let me see my husband."

And she sank down on a chair. Her sobs choked her; she wrung her hands.

The old guard was put completely out of countenance. He twirled his whistle in his hands, but what could be done? Call the other guards? What was the use? His whole experience of thirty years did not help him in the least; he felt himself disarmed.

At last, an idea seemed to bring him light.

"Return tomorrow," said he, in a low voice, throwing a glance at the door of the office. "The director will return this evening; perhaps he will act on his own responsibility . . . This is an inspector, he would not dare . . . I will speak to the physician. Tomorrow morning, be here at nine o'clock, speak to the

director . . . This way, this way," added he, aloud, pushing gently towards the door the tottering woman.

With haggard eyes, Julie let herself be led by the arm. She sobbed no more, she trembled in every limb, and her colorless lips launched this malediction.

"Be cursed, heartless men, with your rules and your laws, made to break hearts!"

## II.

Julie Tissot had roamed all day in the vicinity of the prison. These words: "inflammation of the chest, vomiting of blood," rang in her ears; thoughts, scraps of incoherent thoughts, pursued each other in her head, without her being able to stop at any of them.

Sometimes she saw her husband dying, his eyes wide open, alone, abandoned in a great room, vainly calling his Julie to give him water, then falling back exhausted on his bed,—and a sombre despair took possession of the poor woman.

She walked, walked straight on, without knowing where she was going. . . A moment later she threw off her torpor, her brain refused to admit that Jean, so strong, so robust, so full of energy, was struck with this terrible sickness. He would get up again as soon as he should see her; she would give him courage, recall him to life. And dreams of happiness unfolded before her eyes, carrying her on their wings.

The mist was already settling on the valley, when the humidity of the evening and the frights of an empty stomach reminded her that she must seek a shelter for the night. She directed her steps towards the village, crossed it once, then again, before deciding to enter a little inn which she had perceived on entering the hamlet.

Timidly, noiselessly, she went into the low and dark cafe of the inn, and waited till the proprietress, occupied at the other end of the hall, should notice her.

Contrary to her expectations, she was well received by the bourgeoisie,—a woman already old, who carried cheerfully the weight of her completed fifty years and her obesity. They see so much misery in the hamlet of the central prison, they witness so much suffering, that the friends of the prisoners are generally pretty well received.

"But you too, poor girl, you are sick; you need rest very much," she said to her, when Julie explained that she had come to see her husband, but, he being sick, she might perhaps remain eight or ten days.

While talking with her customers, the old woman tried to make her swallow some spoonfuls of soup and a few drops of wine. But Julie could take nothing: after twenty-two hours of travelling, of expectation and blasted hopes, the bread seemed bitter, the wine sharp. She hurried up to her room, hoping to find a moment of repose in her bed. But, when she entered the room, she went to the open window and stood there motionless.

A shapeless mass of buildings, added during the centuries one after another, work-shops blackened with smoke and crowned by high chimneys, a whole city, but a city dead, hushed, without the least sign of life, rose before

her. Beyond the exterior wall, which sent here and there steely reflections in the moonlight, she saw endless rows of grated windows, strongly lighted. One would have said they might be palaces illuminated for a festival; they were the dormitories of a thousand prisoners. Julie tried to guess which was Jean's window. She pressed her burning forehead against the window; her eyes tried to penetrate space, to pierce the walls, to discover the sick man's bed.

He is there; a single wall separates them. She might take care of him, bring a ray of light into his sad existence, whisper in his ear one of those sweet words which he has not heard in so long a time and which would encourage the man bowed down under the weight of this sad life. But the barbarous law is there,—putting between them impenetrable walls, bristling with soldiers ready to fire.

Oh, yes, the law! It does not fail, poor Julie, to destroy the happiness of a family, under the pretext of correcting men.

"Jean, Jean, my love!" she calls in the silence of the night. For sole answer, the cry of "Sentinel, attention!" rises every quarter hour, dying away in the distance and then returning, always so menacing.

"If he should die," thought Julie, "I shall not survive him. I have no one in the world, not a single heart to whom I am dear. With him gone, the last hope vanished, what would be left to me? The poor pity of a few neighbors?—No! he alone attaches me to life!"

Julie was of an impressionable, loving nature. Up to the present time, she had always loved, she had always been loved, and life without affection seemed to her harder than death. In her childhood she had been cared for and petted as much as the poverty of her parents would permit.

Her father, a miner in one of the pits of a great company, serious, often grave, had always a caressing word for his little Julie,—as gay and full of life as a bird.

Her mother, until the sickness which kept her to her bed for long years, had been able to provide for the household out of the meagre wages of her husband. Julie always had her little neat apron and some dainties in her basket, when she ran to school.

She was fifteen years old when her mother fell sick, a sickness from which she never recovered. This first serious sorrow transformed Julie. From a girl, gay and rebellious, she became serious and industrious. Her great black eyes acquired then an expression of pensive gravity.

The task now fell upon her of conducting the little household, of doing her best to fill her mother's place by her father's side. You should have seen how grateful he was to her in consequence, with what tenderness he caressed his child's pretty head. They were more than a father and daughter: they were two friends.

From time to time, on Sundays, the young people of the village held a little fete in the large hall of the inn.

They danced to the music of the violin, and some ribbon-weavers in the vicinity were invited to these fetes. There Julie made the acquaintance of Jean Tissot, a fine boy, with a sprightly face, expressive eyes, and a black mustache. They finished by loving each other.

The young people were happy. Only one thing threw a shadow over their happiness,—the military service which Jean had still before him. But



everything seemed to smile on them, and the day when the lots were drawn, Jean came to announce that he had a good number; he had only one year to serve. How happy that evening was at the miner's. It was the occasion of a little fete. Julie, beaming with happiness, was still more beautiful than ever.

It was decided that the marriage should take place on Jean's return.

They would not leave her father's house. It would be a little far for Jean; he certainly could not come to breakfast; but Julie would fix his basket for him every morning, she would go to meet him, and in the evening they would all reunite about this same table. All a dream of happiness—a dream!

This was at the beginning of the autumn. A heavy heat weighed on the village: not a breath to refresh the stifling air. The evening before, the father had returned more serious than usual. He had seen the old miners shake their heads on leaving the pits. "It smells bad in the mine," they said. Foreseeing an explosion of firedamp, they looked anxiously at the sky, longing for a gust of wind from the east.

But the east wind did not come the next day. Not a breath of air in the morning, when the anxious father left the house, giving his wife and child a longer and more tender embrace than usual.

At four o'clock, a rumbling noise was heard. In less than a quarter of an hour, the women, pale, with haggard eyes, were already around the shaft, striving to read their destinies in the black depths of the abyss. Preparations were being made for the work of rescue.

Two hours passed before they had news from below, brought by men blackened with smoke, bruised, who could hardly believe in the happiness of seeing again the blue sky. They said that about thirty men must have been buried by the explosion: Julie's father was among the number.

Three days, three times twenty-four hours, passed before they succeeded in opening a way. The women were beside themselves.

During these three days, Julie remained there, seated on a heap of that mineral, every cartful of which is stained with human blood. Neither the rain which began to fall in torrents nor the entreaties of Jean could make her quit her post. She had even forgotten her mother.

When the basket began to bring up the corpses, the distracted women broke the chain of sentries and rushed towards the abyss, uttering heart-rending cries when they saw again, disfigured, calcined, these same faces which, three days before, had smiled at them on leaving. Certain bodies were recognizable only by the clothes: among others Julie's father, whose head had been crushed by a mass of rock.

"Dear father, my love," she cried, covering with kisses his icy-cold breast. Jean drew her away by force: he feared lest he might see her also grow rigid on the corpse.

With her head pressed against the window, Julie saw all these horrible scenes pass again before her eyes.

She resumed the thread of her memories.

A month passed before she could return to her occupations. Misery menaced the fireside. Then Jean left for military service. To support her mother it became necessary to seek work.

A cousin of Jean—he had no other relatives—persuaded Julie to leave the village for the city, where she could find occupation. She learned the trade of winder, and was soon working by the side of her cousin.

The separation of the young people had been painful.

“You will not forget me during my absence?” said the young man. “You will wait for me? It is happily only a year; it will not be long. Be patient a little while. As soon as I return, we will be married; I will take care of you, my beauty; you will rest from all that you have suffered.”

“Can you doubt it?” answered Julie. “Never, no, never, can anyone take your place in my heart.”

“Take care, Julie. If you should love another, you know that I would be capable of anything: of killing you, you, and of putting an end to my own life.”

“Why do you say that, Jean, dear? You do not know me. Go, since it must be, and return as quickly as possible. Your Julie will wait for you. But you, take care that, with your hot head, no misfortune comes to you: I could not survive you!” . . .

The young people passed the whole day together in this way. driving away the anxieties of the separation by dreams of happiness after the return.

The year was painful. A day of twelve hours in a little stifling work shop, under the superintendence of a bigoted old woman; the poverty that is inevitable on wages of forty *sous* a day; the revolting advances of the employer’s son,—one must bear everything to avoid being put out on the street. But she had the sweet words of her mother and Jean’s letters, which the atmosphere of the barracks had not been able to soil with its fetid breath.

At last, the year had passed. Jean had returned, and a life of peaceful happiness began for the three. Julie worked no more in the shop; Jean, who made a good living, demanded that she should rest a little and care for her mother. This lasted some months, a year of happiness.

All the little details of these months that had passed so happily, sprang up again in Julie’s memory. They were so happy, and everything had been so brutally shattered.

She shuddered at the recollection of the evening when they came to tell her that her husband had been carried away to the police station: that, quarrelling with an overseer, he had almost killed him with a knife.

“Jean, Jean, why did you do this?” murmured Julie. “How happy we might have been without this!”

And immediately the image of her cousin rose before her, a child on her hands,—the child of this overseer, a rascal who had abandoned her after having seduced her,—and Julie hastened to say:

“No, no, forgive me for having dared to make you, even in my thought, this reproach. Alone in the world, without relatives, were you not bound to take her part?”

And she sees the court-room: an indifferent public, come to seek impressions and something to gossip about; her cousin, pale and trembling in a corner of the witness bench; her husband between two policemen. Before him, the judges, somnolent, fair-spoken, tranquil; an attorney-general, choleric, furious at having obtained only six years’ confinement for a child-murderess of eighteen years, who had just been tried before the same court.

Her husband's voice, tranquil, assured, a little tired, still resounded in her ears. What could he say more? That he was his cousin's sole defender, that he had done what he ought to do? An advocate would have talked an hour; he confined himself to relating what this overseer was, what his cousin had suffered.

But the attorney-general made a long speech. He spoke of the immorality of the working-classes, he insisted on the need of reacting, of treating the turbulent rigorously; he dwelt especially on the resistance Jean had made at the moment of his arrest, and he begged the judges to give him five years' imprisonment.

Jean was condemned to three years in prison.

The old mother could not endure this sorrow: they carried her to the cemetery a fortnight after the sentence. The handsome fellow was shaved, dressed in ignoble garb, and sent to the central prison.

The moon was already descending towards the horizon. One moment more, and it would disappear behind the forests which covered the summit of the hills. The silent night enveloped the prison and the hamlet. A thick mist, heavy and cold, was condensing in the valley and covering it with a veil, effacing the sharp lines of the heavy buildings.

Julie did not feel it penetrate her clothes, her flesh, her bones: the fatigue of the journey, the emotions of the day, had had their effect. With her head bent forward on her arm, she slept, still leaning against the window open to the cold night breezes.

### III.

At five o'clock Julie was up; at seven o'clock she was already ringing at the grated door of the prison.

"Has the director returned?" was her first question, as soon as the porter appeared behind the grating with his bunch of keys.

Yes, he had returned. But he would not be there before eight o'clock,—and the porter started to go back to his lodge.

Julie begged him to let her enter, to wait at the clerk's office. Dreading to lose a single minute, she wished to see the director as soon as he arrived. And she resumed her place on the bench, mute witness of so much suffering. All expectation, she was ready to spring up each time that she heard a door open.

Nine o'clock, ten o'clock. No director. They said that he had gone directly to the pretorium. Guards came and went, exchanged words in a slang peculiar to their calling, of which Julie could comprehend nothing. She still waited, each moment seeming an eternity.

She caught at last some words in the conversation of two guards; one of them came from the hospital, and she accosted him at once.

"Tell me, sir, what must I do to speak with the director? I have come to see my husband, but I have not yet obtained a permit."

"And who is your husband?"

"Jean Tissot: he was in the hospital yesterday."

"In which shop did he work?"

"In the correction quarter, in the shop where they make mother-of-pearl articles."

"Jean Tissot? correction quarter? number 4,237?"

"Yes, yes. that is the one."

"But why do you wish to be allowed to see him? He is to be buried in an hour. Do you not know that he died yesterday?"

A terrible cry, escaping from the poor woman's breast, made the guard recoil. Her knees bent, she felt herself giving way, when she perceived the chief guard who had evinced some sympathy for her the day before. She ran towards him, with the secret hope that he would contradict this terrible news.

Unhappily, it was only too true. It was precisely to invite Madam to go to the clerk's office and receive twenty-two francs which remained of Jean Tissot's money that the chief guard had come. There were also his effects ...

Julie did not hear. Pale as a sheet, her eyes dilated, she leaned against the door, trying to articulate some words. They hardly succeeded in comprehending her, when she said in a stifled voice:

"You will let me say adieu? . . ."

Absolutely impossible. The regulations were opposed to it.

"At one o'clock you will see the funeral procession. Keep near that gate, by the side of the guard-house; I will show it to you. You can follow the procession as far as the cemetery."

Julie followed the guard, without a word, to the guard-house. There she sank down on the outer steps.

No sobs, no tears. Motionless, like one of those statues on which the sculptors of the middle ages have fixed the sufferings of a humanity given over to pestilence, famine, and the stake, she fixed her dry, undeviating eyes on the door by which was to go out all that was dearest to her in the world.

She saw nothing, heard nothing. The passers-by stared at her, opened their eyes wide, on seeing this expression of anguish. A child stopped, and wished to accost her, but recoiled before this fixed gaze. The soldiers of the guard went on talking and jesting by her side. Julie did not notice them; she saw only the door-way.

Suddenly she trembled and with a bound threw herself towards the door, behind which a grave voice chanted the prayer for the dead.

The folding doors opened. At the head of the procession, a prisoner, in brown jacket and pantaloons, with gray hair floating in the wind, advanced slowly, carrying a great cross and trying to recite in a composed voice the Latin of the prayer. A priest, in white, followed him, looking out with an indifferent eye on the court which opened before him. Four prisoners, also in brown jackets, brown caps without binding falling over their eyes, marched in step with their heavy wooden shoes, carrying the coffin covered with a gray cloth, and a large white cross.

Four other prisoners, glad to get outside the walls, followed them to relieve the bearers. Two guards, with blue cloaks over their shoulders, were talking with the man who had opened the door for them.

No one else,—not a friend, not a comrade from the work-shop who might have been allowed to follow the procession. A great black dog,—the undertaker's,—with drooping head, brought up the rear, and he alone seemed to be penetrated with the gravity of the moment.

With a heart-rending cry, Julie threw herself towards the coffin.

"Jean! Jean dear! if I could only see you!" she cried.

With one movement she snatched away the pall and uncovered the white pine coffin. She tried to lift the lid. Two guards seized her by the arms, removing her gently.

"Be quiet, the bier is nailed."

"Let me see him, let me just embrace him one last time," implored Julie, struggling. "Wretches! to kill a man, and not even permit one to give him a last adieu!"

"Come! come! no noise!" replied a guard, while the coffin, re-covered with the gray cloth, moved on, tossing heavily on the men's shoulders. "There must be no outcry here! You must keep quiet, if you wish to be permitted to follow the procession."

Julie suddenly comprehended the horrible reality. Since her Jean had entered those walls, he belonged to her no more. Even dead, she had no right in him: an outside, brutal force had taken possession of him, and could even prevent his wife from following him to his last resting-place.

Without saying a word, Julie disengaged herself from the guard: she rejoined the procession, and placed herself by the side of the dog. Her suffering face suddenly took an expression of fixed determination; was a plan ripening in her head?

The cemetery was divided into two parts: one for the administration, the other for the prisoners. Here, crosses, flowers, protected by railings; there, ran uncultivated field, three large deep trenches, serving as common graves. They deposited the coffin on the edge of one of these trenches.

Julie did not approach. She, here, was only a stranger; she held herself aloof.

She saw the coffin descend into the trench, where there was still room for other unfortunates. She became all attention when the grave-diggers set to work; all her heart-strings quivered each time that a shovel-full fell heavily on the coffin. She counted them, and seemed to measure with her eyes the bed which was being piled up.

She did not approach the grave till the grave-diggers had finished their work, and then fell on her knees upon the freshly-disturbed earth, which still bore traces of the wooden shoes.

The guards, the priest, moved by this silent grief, drew back a few steps. Now, left alone, she could abandon herself to her grief. An absolute silence reigned all about her. . . .

But it was necessary to return: they were going to close the cemetery. . . .

The priest approached Julie, who rose and suddenly recoiled. He tried to speak to her of a world where there would be neither pleasures nor pains; she did not listen; she only understood that she could not remain any longer, that she must leave. The same force still interposed.

She started in fact, and took a few steps on the road, but returned to seat herself on a little stone-post at the gate of the cemetery.

"Oh! I will see him!" she said. "Not to let me see him when he was sick! Not to let me make my last farewell! I must see him. . . . But they could bury some one else and tell me that it was Jean?"

And she recollects that there was a Jacques Tissot in their village. What a resemblance in names, and how easy to mistake the number!

And it seems to her now that it really is Jacques Tissot who is in a pine coffin. Jean is as well as he has been all these eighteen months; he is there, behind those walls, and he does not even mistrust that his Julie, dying of sorrow, is so near him.

But her thoughts become confused. Another idea has been born; it grows, takes root, obtrudes itself, and drives away all others.

"And if they have buried him alive?" she asks herself. "They said that he was sick. Sick people have fainting-fits; they might have taken him for dead. Dead yesterday, buried today! . . . But he may be in a state of lethargy."

All her blood freezes at this thought, and she recalls stories she had heard in her childhood of an old lady buried alive, who revived when a thief disinterred her to get her ring.

She halts decisively at this idea.

"No, I will not let you die: I will restore you, I will dig you up."

She no longer doubts that Jean is buried alive, and all her thoughts are directed towards one object,—to dig up the coffin, open it, see Jean. In a few minutes, her plan had ripened with the rapidity of delirium. She will go and conceal herself in the woods, and as soon as it is night, she will make her way into the cemetery. She will climb up on this stone-post; the railing is low; she can climb over it. She has seen where they put the shovel, and she can quickly clear away the earth. Her eyes glisten with a wild joy at this resolve.

Poor Julie! You do not know that, if you could open the coffin, you would recoil terrified. You do not know that this forehead which you covered with kisses so tender has been crushed with a hammer and that the broken skull has let the gray mass of the brain ooze out; that the heart which beat for you is torn out, cut in pieces, and crammed, pell-mell with the intestines, into this breast on which you rested so comfortably your pretty brown head . . .

No, Julie knows nothing of all this, and, alone, abandoned by all the world, every one occupied with his petty affairs—alone, without a single heart to help her, her frenzy goes on increasing.

She goes into the woods. She seeks, but does not find a hiding-place safe enough to crouch in till evening: the trees are too thinly-scattered, the bushes are too bare. There is a cave filled with brambles: there she will hide herself, without perceiving that the thorns tear her hands and cheeks.

"If he only does not suffocate before night!"—that is her only thought; but she recalls again the old woman disinterred by the thief, the two miners buried with her father: after three days they were still alive.

In her delirium, the poor Julie does not dare to move from her den. She is tormented with thirst, but:—"They will see me, they will prevent me," she thinks, and puts leaves on her tongue to add fuel to the flame which is devouring her.

At last, night approaches; some stars shine through the branches. Julie, holding her breath, quits her refuge and glides through the brush-wood. The briars tear her hands, she does not feel them. Very soon she loses comb and hat; her black tresses, floating over her shoulders, catch in the bushes.

The noise of a dead branch which falls, of a bird which stirs in the confusion, fills her with terror. All the tales of ghosts which she has heard in her childhood, all the superstitions of a village of miners, reappear before her eyes. Each tree seems a monster ready to smother her in its clutches.

The moon is shining as she leaves the forest. She descends the hill and stops fifty steps away from the cemetery, not daring to approach it; her dress in rags, her hair full of dead branches, drops of blood on her livid cheeks, she tries to walk, to run, but remains fastened to the spot. The fields, the woods, seem to flutter about her, peopled with fantastic beings: all is confusion in her head.

A night-bird's sad plaint is heard,—it is Jean who is calling her! Then she makes a superhuman effort and throws herself towards the gate. She is already climbing the post, her hand touches the edge of the railing, she is ready to get over it.

But at this moment she perceives a great black cross stationed in front of the gate. For her this is an immense, black, hairy being, extending his arms. He grows larger, approaches, his arms lengthen, stretch out . . . She does not breathe or budge. Now the arms touch her, clasp her, stifle her . . . A feeble cry, and Julie falls. The moon illumines with its mild beams this pale face contracted with pain and suffering.

The next morning a peasant perceived her. He approached and spoke to her; she responded only in incoherent words. Her whole body was burning, consumed by fever. They carried her to the hospital of the neighboring village.

Her delirium was terrible. She tore the bands by which they tried to keep her on the bed. She fell on her knees before the nurse, begging her to let her see her Jean.

"I am his wife," she said. "If you only knew how he loves me. We are two, alone in the world . . . No one . . . I am everything to him . . . I will cure him"

Then, rising, she leaped forward and seized the nun by the throat, crying:

"Ah! wretches,—not to see him! Not even when sick! not even when dead! Infamous assassins! Wicked rules!"

Four days later they carried her to the cemetery, as they had carried Jean. There was not even the dog to follow her,—the only being whose sad eyes had testified a regret for this life, broken off in the midst of its dreams of happiness. The same indifference, the same abandonment, as for Number 4237.

The End.

Translated for *Liberty* by Sarah E. Holmes.

## INTENSIVE FARMING IN FLANDERS.

THE necessity of growing more foodstuffs in this country has perhaps never been so evident as it is now. That the population of these islands does not obtain from its land all that it could is no longer contested. Thus the question arises—Cannot we take advantage of the considerable numbers of Belgians, especially from Flanders, to whom we are giving hospitality, to learn something about their methods of intensive farming? Could not, let us say, several County Councils, especially in those counties where there are patches of a lighter soil, establish a number of small farms, upon which Flemish farmers would show us what they get from the land, and how they manage to get it?

Anyone who will refer to the splendid book of Seeböhm Rowntree, “Lessons from Belgium,” will see that there is no shame to take such lessons. Belgium obtains from its 4,000,000 acres of cultivated land no less than £80,000,000 of home-grown foodstuffs, which means £20 on the average from each acre of the cultivated area, whereas the Danes, whose agriculture is also intensive, obtain only £6 per acre of the cultivated area, the French only £5 9s., and Great Britain only £4. Of course, everyone knows that there are in this country admirably managed farms, which could be taken as models for all Europe. But it is not upon the exceptions that the richness of the country is based: it depends much more upon the yield of the mass of the small farms. My studies of the small farms of Flanders during several visits before the war have convinced me that in Belgium, as elsewhere, the high returns from the land are due to the great mass of the small farmers.

The two provinces of Flanders, Western and Eastern, with their average population of 762 souls per square mile (891 in the eastern portion), belong to the most densely inhabited portions of Europe. Their population has remained to a great extent agricultural, and not only all the food required by the inhabitants was obtained till lately from the soil, but foodstuffs were exported in large quantities. At a time when complaints about “the rural exodus” were heard on all sides, Flanders remained an exception. With the aid of friends in Ghent, who, from their infancy, knew the life of the farmers around them, I visited some of the farms and collected materials which may be of interest to English readers.

The suggestion that the soil of Flanders is exceptionally fertile, or the climate exceptionally favourable, must be excluded, as de Laveleye has shown in his classical work, *Essai sur la population rurale de la Belgique*. “A soil,” he wrote, “both sandy and wet, containing no lime, and with a subsoil of ferrugineous tuff and gravel, exposed in many places to inundations and swamping—this was the land from which the Flemish population had to obtain its food. Of the various soils cultivated by man few are equally ungrateful.” Its present fertility is entirely due to the work of many generations. The value which the Flemish population attach to the land, and in virtue of which they will not leave the smallest plot uncultivated, may be observed even before one leaves Ghent. Not a bit of temporarily vacant land on the outskirts of the town can be seen anywhere. Horticultural establishments, market gardens, and dairy farms begin to make their



appearance before you have issued from the suburbs. And as soon as you have left behind you the last buildings, you are at once amidst a rural population. I have visited a number of these farms in the suburbs. The small and simple house, the courtyard, the cow sheds, the stables, and the pigsty, are so disposed as to spare every available foot for culture. In most cases dairy-farming is combined with market-gardening. It would not pay, the farmers say, to work the one without the other. By the side of every dairy farm there is, therefore, a market-garden, upon which the manure derived from the farm is utilised. And there are in most cases also a few glass houses, or at least a few frames for raising young plants and forcing early vegetables. All these farms look prosperous, and although their occupiers may have to move at any time, they keep their little establishments in beautiful order. In most cases only two or three cows are kept, or even only one. Very often there is no horse, and in this case the cart with the milk and the vegetables is taken to town by two harnessed dogs, aided by the farmer. There are hundreds of such dairy-and-garden farmers in the immediate neighbourhood of Ghent, all working without the help of hired labour. Most of them succeed so well that, after a number of years, they either become the owners of the land, or remove further into the country in order to take larger farms.

I made the acquaintance of one of these farmers, who was described as wealthy. The farm was his own property. He kept five cows, one horse, and a good many pigs. The house and all the buildings were small, neat, and built close to one another, while 400 *vergees* (about one acre and a half), were kept under cultivation. Two cool greenhouses, each 130 feet long, were stocked from top to bottom with cauliflower plants, early peas, celery plants, &c., all in pots; while outdoors the well-manured beds were already prepared to receive, as soon as the great frosts would be over, the young plants of early vegetables, cauliflowers, carrots, peas, lettuce, and all sorts of greens and sweet herbs, of which the Belgians make their delicious soups. From these outdoor beds the early crops are usually taken in the first days of May, although the climate is colder than the climate of Kent. Perhaps there is a little more sunshine. The farmer's wife, a bright, intelligent woman who spoke good French, laughed when I suggested something to her about "the dead season" on the farm. Her husband, herself, her old mother, a young labourer, and the girl-servant had plenty of work all the year round, and in summer they had to take an additional help. Five people having plenty to do on a farm of less than one acre and a half, summer and winter alike, explains how they manage to get from this small area the staple food for themselves, their four or five cows, as many pigs, and the horse. In reality they buy only bran and beetroot refuse from the sugar factories to feed their live stock. I was told that the cows yielded a daily average of at least 100 litres (88 quarts) of milk. They are milked three times a day, and the early morning's milk is taken to Ghent by the farmer's wife herself in the horse-cart. She has in the town a number of regular customers for milk, butter, and vegetables. The second and third milkings go to make butter, while the skimmed milk feeds the calves and the pigs. A few days before my visit they sold an eight-days' old calf for 32s. Every year they sell also pigs. "Our pigs are "well fed," the farmer's wife said, "and they always weigh at "least 200 kilos" (440 lbs.). The vegetables bring in about ,£60 a year.

## II.

The dairy-and-market-gardening farms do not extend, as a rule, more than two or three miles from town. Further on begins field agriculture and cattle rearing. Even these are, however, on a small scale, larger farms being found in Flanders only on heavy soil, upon which heavy ploughs have to be used, and a larger capital is consequently required. With light soil a farm of twenty acres is considered large; the average is from three to fifteen acres, while farms of one acre are not uncommon. One may judge of the small size of most holdings by the number and the size of the corn stacks on them. In the neighbourhood of Ghent I have rarely seen farms with three or four stacks; the immense majority had only one or two, and these were farms of from three to eight acres. But I saw also much smaller farms, having less than one acre of land, and in this case there would be only one tiny stack standing close to the cottage, while the emerald green with which nearly half of the farmer's land was covered—it was in January—told me that next year the family of this homestead would still have their own bread. There is no exaggeration in saying that in the neighbourhood of Ghent the average size of the farms is not more than four to six acres each, which would give 100 to 150 farms to the square mile.

It was most interesting and instructive to walk in this part of the country. I went one morning to a neighbouring village. It was a market-day, in the deepest part of the winter, and yet what impressed me most was the intensity of life on the road. Those who have lived amongst the peasants will surely understand what such animation means. To see them returning from the market—some leading by a rope a milch cow, or a young bull, or a couple of pigs, others bringing with them new agricultural implements which rattled in their carts as they drove by, and yet others bringing various products of the town industries in their baskets—such a sight means that these people not only work on the land, but that they work for themselves. And when I saw a young husband and wife struggling with a frisky heifer, which they led by a rope, I knew at once that they must have a home of their own, and were not mere hired labourers who have nothing to look forward to. Horse-carts and dog-carts, cattle, and numbers of people marching with their huge baskets on their shoulders, were crowding on the road, and this activity of rural life on a market-day shows, better than anything else, that there is plenty of work and prosperity in the country.

In the country I found the same careful treatment of the land as in the suburbs of the city. Plough-land, which may be sown with rye or wheat, is what the Flemish peasant values most, and he spares no labour to render every square yard of his farm suitable for the plough. It is the constant pre-occupation of the farmer to transform the lower meadow-land into plough-land. On the small farms one can see how in every slight depression of the fields there is a carefully deposited little heap of road-scrappings and other rubbish, maybe brought together little by little by the children, in order to fill it up and thus level the field. And, equally, every slight swelling of the ground is levelled down. I saw fields in which the upper layer of vegetable mould had been taken off; then the sand below had been excavated to a certain depth and sold; and finally the mould had been replaced so as to make the field quite

even. Only the lowest portions of the land are given to meadow, and no labour is spared in irrigating and manuring them, so as to obtain wonderful crops of hay.

Strict economy in land is the rule. Hedges are kept only along the main roads and the main ditches, and then they are only made of such bushes as give fuel wood. The plough is brought very close to the edge of the hedge, and the narrow slip that is left is cultivated, down to the very roots of the bushes, with the spade, and then clover will be sown upon that border, to bring up a few rabbits. Even the meagre vegetation along the roadsides is utilised; the shepherd every day takes his sheep along the country roads, as they always find something to nibble on the roadsides and on the borders of the ditches.

The Flemish villages contain but few families which have nothing to do with agriculture. They are truly agricultural villages, even though the holdings of each family are very small as a rule. Most of the staple food is still home-grown. It is the same with those half-farmers who hold so little land that they must work on the larger farms. They are generally very poor, but they still get their staple food from their little plots. The remainder will be got by the family carrying on in the winter some domestic industry. Numbers of such industries are giving work to the Flemish peasants. In the villages hundreds of thousands of *sabots* are made of the wood of the poplars, which are such favourite trees in the Flemish landscape. Wooden utensils, wicker furniture, baskets, ropes, and many other articles of general use are fabricated in the small village houses. In some of the cottages one finds knitting-machines and hand-looms, to say nothing of hand-made lace. Some of the finest lace sold in the high-class shops of Belgium is made in the dim light of a cottage window.

### III.

Serious farming begins with those who hold five to ten acres of land, and this class constitutes the true backbone of the agricultural population. What the speciality of this class of farmers is it would be difficult to say. They utilise the land in any productive manner, and they make money out of everything—butter, cheese, rabbits, poultry, green and root crops, vegetables, cereals, &c. The thousands of Ostend rabbits carried away by large steamers to England are all collected from such small farms one by one, and rarely more than half-a-dozen at a time. Honey, poultry, millions of eggs, exported every year, come in small quantities from the same little homesteads. It is interesting to note that this production on a small scale not only answers its purpose of growing considerable quantities of foodstuffs, but that it seems to be the best method all round. Large poultry farms, I was told, as well as the attempts to breed rabbits on a large scale, have repeatedly ended in failure, while the small farmers make a good income out of both. The rabbits seem to thrive best in small families. A dozen of them are usually kept in a corner of the yard, and are fed on all sorts of vegetable refuse. Two breeds a year are usually sold, a large fat rabbit fetching fifteen pence. The poultry, too, require no special attention when the hens can be allowed to run free, and little food is required in addition to what they find themselves. The new-laid eggs which my friends at Ghent had in the midst of winter came from a neighbouring farm, where they were obtained without more trouble than to let the hens roost in the dry

shelter of the loft of the house. This is a widespread fashion, and it is quite usual to see at the side of the small farmhouse some simple contrivance which permits the hens to reach the loft and to roost therein. The variety of plants grown on these farms is astounding, for, besides the cereals, the green crops for fodder, and the root crops, quite a number of plants are cultivated for industrial purposes—such as colza, flax, chicory, hops, &c. Owing to the variety of cultures, the fields in Flanders retain all the year round their pleasing aspect. Immediately after the cereal crops have been taken in, the soil is re-occupied by some sort of plants for a catch crop. It need hardly be said that on such farms of from five to eight acres a horse is not always kept. The ploughing and the harrowing are often done by hiring a ploughman, and the remaining work is done with the spade. No labourer is kept in such cases; it is the husband, the wife, and the children (after they have left school) who work, and they all work hard. Even the farm dog is kept more as a worker than as a watch; he works at the wheel of the well to pump water, he helps to cart the manure to the field, and, aided by the farmer, pulls the loaded cart to market.

#### IV.

A still higher class of farmers are those who own or hold from fifteen to twenty acres of land. We visited one such farm, which my friends considered as typical of this class. It comprises six hectares (sixteen acres), which are rented at £30 a year, with an additional small piece of land elsewhere, rented separately; and two items only, butter and fattened cattle, are produced here for sale. Farmers, as a rule, do not like to be questioned about their incomes; but what the man and his wife told me themselves was sufficiently instructive. They had 12 acres under the plough—4 1/2 acres under wheat, four fields of 1 3/4 acres each under oats, clover, potatoes, and carrots respectively, and 1 1/4 acres under beetroot. However, owing to the catch crops, each field was meant to give two crops a year. This is the rule all over Flanders. Thus rye or wheat, sown in October and harvested in July, is followed by a crop of turnips which will be dug up in January. In the sheds we saw four milch cows—splendid creatures, which gave 150 litres (132 quarts) of milk a day, as I could ascertain from the cards delivered by the Co-operative Dairy to acknowledge the daily receipts. There were, besides, two heifers, two calves, two young bulls, one horse, two old pigs and twelve young ones. Some poultry were running about. All the human beings on the farm (four in the family and one labourer), and all their live-stock, found their food on the land belonging to this farm, although it covered, with the additional plot, less than eighteen acres. At a distance of six miles from Ghent, the farmer finds no advantage in sending his milk to town, and prefers to take it to the Co-operative Creamery for butter. There the cream is taken off by means of a separator, and the skimmed milk is returned to the farmer, who uses it for fattening his cattle. I saw the cards delivered every week from the Co-operative Creamery, and it appeared that the farmer's account for the butter sold by the Creamery amounted to £2 10s. per week in January, which represents a good income for the small quantity of land that was held in this case. Altogether, the Co-operative Creamery is highly spoken of by the farmers. It would be difficult to

find out the total product of the eighteen acres. Very probably the farmer could not tell himself. At any rate, for butter alone he gets about ,£130 from his four cows every year. Such results are obtained, of course, only in small farming and only by means of very hard work.

In visiting Flemish farmers, I found, however, that the women ^work too hard, and therefore have no time left to render their homes a little more comfortable. Close contact with the Englishwoman would teach the Flemish peasant-woman how to make the living-room more cheerful. The absence of cosiness in the houses is striking, and no progress seems to have been made for the last thirty years. All these small farmers have money, for they represent the most thrifty and saving portion of the population. Unfortunately, unscrupulous company promoters and bogus bankers make the same ravages as in France. They are perpetually attacking the small farmers' savings, and tempting them by promises of high dividends, only to swindle them.

Reviewing the causes which contribute to keep the small agriculturist on the soil in Flanders, it must be said that, with all his ability and love of the land, he would hardly be able to struggle against all the adversities that a farmer has to face nowadays, were it not for the support he finds in the traditions and manner of life of his country. The conditions of land tenure are certainly the most important; but the help which the peasant derives from men of science, the low rates of transport on the railways, the market-places in the large towns, the weekly fairs, and, above all, the spirit of sociability and co-operation which has been retained in the Flemish villages since mediaeval times—all these are so many causes which help him to retain his connection with the land. Yet I have no desire to represent the Flemish tillers of the soil as a modern Arcadia. On the contrary, they are in need of many serious changes, above all in land tenure. The land, which is mostly in the hands of the rich, is rented too high, and the rents, as de Laveleye pointed out, are increased so rapidly that the peasants are very far from deriving from the land all the wealth which their wonderful skill and labour deserve. Besides, the land is exposed to all sorts of speculation. Again the farmer wants much more leisure and education, and much less taxation. He works too hard, and the life he lives is too poor. The progress and the wonders of modern civilisation do not reach him. The necessity of urgent change is thus apparent in Flanders, as it is all the world over. But the main point is that the Flemish system of small farms and intensive culture has kept the population from deserting the land. In consequence, the cost of living is much lower than in countries which have to import their food, when it unavoidably becomes a matter of speculation for swarms of middlemen.

Sophie Kropotkin.

## NUMEROUS INSECTS WASHED UP BY THE SEA.

Have any of your correspondents mentioned the following fact? For the last two days, August 8 and 9, the shore at Dymchurch, Kent, and for more than two miles towards Hythe, was covered with countless quantities of winged ants washed to the shore by the waves. At low tide one sees three or four rims, so thick that each makes a black stripe, from two to three inches wide, running without interruption for more than three miles, and probably extending to a greater distance. We have had during these days winds from the north-east, very light on Tuesday morning, but strong since that.

Dymchurch, Kent, August 10. Sophie Kropotkin.

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### Numerous Insects Washed up by the Sea.

THE phenomenon referred to under the above heading in your issue of August 17 may be in part accounted for by the fact that on August 7, at many spots in the neighbourhood of Godalming (S. W. Surrey), the air was thick for several hours with swarms of winged ants. The direction of the wind was from the north-west, force moderate. Assuming the like to have taken place at other places, it is quite possible that large numbers of ants may have been carried out to sea and drowned from this region of Surrey and Hampshire.

Hunstanton, August 19. OSWALD H. LATTER.

## THE HIGHER EDUCATION OF WOMEN IN RUSSIA.'

THE Russian educated woman is known to some extent in this country for the part which she took in the struggles for political freedom. Very little is known, however, about the hard, and often really heroic, struggles which Russian women have sustained simply to obtain the right to a better education; still less about the wonderful organizing powers which they have displayed in the creation and maintenance of their educational institutions.

If women have to struggle hard for their rights in this country, one can easily imagine the resistance they had to overcome in a country like Russia, where, in addition to the same obstacles, an autocrat government puts a veto on every progressive movement.

Notwithstanding all these difficulties, Russian women win ground every year. They so well show, in their every day life, what an educated woman is worth, whether she carries on some profession or simply remains a wife and mother in her household, that even the autocrat government has to give way. And they succeed so well in their endeavors, that Americans who know how backward Russia is in matters of popular education will probably be astonished to learn how much has already been done in Russia for the intermediate and higher education of women; how considerable are the numbers of women who have already received university education; and to what useful account most of them have turned their knowledge. To bring Russian society, and especially the government, to acknowledge the accomplished facts, women had of course to go through many hard struggles, and these struggles I will attempt to relate as briefly as possible.

Every one knows what a stupendous intellectual revival took place in Russia after the Crimean war and the death of Nicholas the First. In less than eight years—1857 to 1864—the whole system of Russian life was entirely changed. The serfs were liberated, and peasant self-government was introduced. The rotten tribunals of old were abolished, and the institutions of the jury and justices of the peace (selected by all the householders of all classes) were introduced. Provincial assemblies were opened since 1864. A new spirit was infused in every branch of life. It was a wonderful time, when hundreds of quite new men, who formerly, with characteristic Russian timidity, only dreamed on the quiet about necessary changes, and only occasionally launched their ideas on paper for circulation among a few friends, came forward. In a few years many radical reforms were accomplished. The educational question certainly was not forgotten in the turmoil, and girls' education benefited in it largely.

The schools for girls were very few at that time; even in the well-to-do classes one girl only out of a hundred had the chance to receive some education at school. The few schools which did exist were sharply divided between the different classes of society. There were schools for the daughters of noblemen, schools for the daughters of the merchant class, for the daughters of the clergy, for the daughters of the artisans, and almost none whatever for the toiling, "tax-paying" classes.

Most of them were boarding schools, as strict in their inner organization as convents. In the schools for the daughters of nobility, whereto only the

selected few were admitted, the girls had to stay from six to nine years, entirely separated from their homes and the world. Never, under any circumstances, was a girl allowed to spend a few days in her home. Even in such cases as the death of a girl's father or mother, or some other very near relative, the girl was only brought to the funeral by a governess, and taken back as soon as the ceremony was over. Once a year, at Easter, they were allowed to take a drive in a long procession of carriages, which no relative dared to approach.

The program of education was, of course, in accordance with these principles. The girls lived like hothouse plants in quite a secluded atmosphere, far apart from real life, in a world created by their own imagination, and as different from reality as it could be. They were taught all sorts of accomplishments, but very seldom the voice of an earnest teacher appealed to their higher intellectual faculties.

The schools for the other classes of society differed by little; the pupils only stayed there for a shorter time and were taught fewer accomplishments.

The insufficiency of that sort of education was broadly felt, and already in 1847 and 1855 an attempt had been made to reform the schools. Now that everything was reformed in Russia, the vague aspirations of previous years were brought out in a definite form, in a memorandum addressed to the czar ; and although the ideas expressed therein were diametrically opposed to the system which had hitherto prevailed, they were fully approved and accepted by the government. The first gymnasium for girls was opened in 1857 ; that is, only four years after the Queen's College in England had received the sanction of Parliament, and the necessity of a thorough education for women was proclaimed there; fifteen years before the public day schools began to be opened in England ; and very nearly thirty years before the Lycees de Demoiselles were opened in France.

The leading feature of the new system was that the girls received an education nearly equal to the education given to the boys in the gymnasia. In all points it was thus directly the opposite of the previous system. From the beginning the girl's gymnasia were put on the same footing as the best institutions of that same class in western Europe. The teachers were chiefly men—the profession of a university degree being a necessary condition. The fees were 50 rubles a year, about \$25.

A demand for such schools came from all parts of the country, and the government encouraged both the demand and private donations for that purpose. Gradually high schools for girls were opened in each province—even in the remotest parts of Circassia and Siberia. The result was that at the present time there are no less than 343 gymnasia for girls in the empire, with no less than 80,000 pupils.

It seems almost incomprehensible nowadays that so deep a change should have been accomplished so suddenly—two years only after the death of Nicholas I ; but it was fully prepared long before.

Women's education and the position of women in society had been eagerly discussed in Russian literature since the "forties" and early "fifties." In their earliest productions, Tourguineff, Goncharoff, Herzen, Madame Hahn, and several others already gave a beautiful type of woman, well educated and



taking to heart all the great questions which impassion mankind. In its leading men Russian society was thus won long ago for the women's cause.

The girls' gymnasia opened a new era for the Russian woman. The subjects were taught there in a serious and attractive way by university men; the girl's brain was really working. The contact between the different classes made a democratic spirit prevail in the schools; even the modest uniform—a brown woolen frock and a black alpaca apron—had its significance. A quite new sort of girl, who longed for a higher education, and often for an independent life, made its appearance. To obtain access to the university now became the watchword of this young generation.

The public at large was bewildered by the new movement. The reactionary press met the claims of the young women with great hostility; but the best men of the time, both in literature and in science, greeted in them a new era for Russia. Much paper and ink was wasted to prove, from the reactionary side, that a woman need not know more than to be a good housewife and a good mother; or that a woman's brain differs from a man's brain, and that, therefore, women must not be allowed to study what men study.

On the other side, our best writers,—much under the influence of the promoters of human beings,—John Stuart Mill, Buckle, Herbert Spencer, and many French and German writers, had an easy task to prove that the child, the husband, the home, and the community at large, can only gain from women's being well educated. Their writings inspired the young generation and gave them new forces for the struggle.

No great movement is due to one single cause, and so it was in this case. Three different sets of women, moved by different impulses, came to the conclusion that they must get access to higher education before any further steps could be taken. There were, first, those who wanted knowledge for knowledge's sake. The dull life of the genteel, ignorant woman, her mean ideals, her incapacity for educating her own children and for being her husband's friend and comrade, are so often the cause of unhappy homes, and this cause was so often indicated in Russian novels and our critical literature, that high-spirited girls made up their minds not to repeat, so far as it depended upon themselves, the unhappy lives of their mothers and grandmothers.

Another category of women were those who had been brought up for the idle life of a country squire's daughter or wife, but now had to earn their living themselves. With the liberation of the serfs in 1861, that idle and easy life was no longer possible, and the change was especially felt by the young unmarried women. Many of them had to leave their country homes and to look for some work in a big city. There they soon realized how terribly hard it is for an uneducated woman to struggle for life, and most of them joined the ranks of those who struggled for a higher education.

To the same category belonged those who had left their homes in order to escape from the despotism and immorality which stifled them. Formerly, a young woman saw no issue whatever in such case. She would have simply bent down before a despot, and often corrupted, husband: she would have slowly died from consumption, looking with a broken heart upon her children being brought up in the poisonous atmosphere.

The most energetic fighters for higher education were, however, those women who came to the conclusion that the greatest happiness in life is to procure happiness and relief from sorrow for others. One of these, N. V. Stasoff, who will stand high in our modern history for the struggle which she carried on unremittingly for thirty-seven years for other people's rights, wrote truly in her Memoirs: "My own sorrow became the source of my happiness. I looked round and put all my soul and love into mankind—and there happiness was." The space of this article would appear much too small if I tried to give even short biographies of some of these women; but I must mention at least a few of them; namely, Miss N. V. Stasoff, who died in 1895 at the age of seventy, literally at the work of her life; Madame M. N. Troubnikoff, who died the same year at the age of sixty, after a life given to the women's cause, and to whom J. S. Mill addressed in 1868 that letter "to Russian women" which was read all over the civilized world; Madame V. P. Tarnovsky, Madame A. P. Philosophoff, and Madame E. I. Conrady, who stood foremost in all the struggles. Their struggles were not for education only, but for all that could alleviate the hard life of women.

The first and most natural step in that direction was to take advantage of every opportunity for getting admission to the universities. A few of the most energetic and promising young women were allowed, indeed, by some of the professors of the St. Petersburg University to attend their lectures as free-comers. These were the modest beginnings of a subsequent victory.

About this time (in 1861) several professors of the St. Petersburg University, disagreeing with the measures taken by the government against the women, opened a sort of free university, in the Municipal Hall of St. Petersburg, and their lectures were crowded by women. Great hopes were cherished at that time that an organized system of higher education for women would finally be obtained. But very soon all such hopes had to be abandoned. In 1862 the reactionary spirit gained the upper hand in the councils of the emperor. And St. Petersburg was closed for a year; the free lectures were forbidden; even the Sunday-schools were closed all over Russia. Tchernyshevsky—a brilliant philosopher and political economist, whose martyrdom is not quite unknown in this country—was transported to the mines in Siberia; as also Mikhailoff, his collaborator, another champion of women's rights. The secret police had free entrance to the universities, and the entire atmosphere in the university became such that several of the best professors left never to return. Even the program of education in the girls' gymnasias was found too extensive and was curtailed—in the natural sciences. In the press all discussion about women's rights and women's education was pitilessly stopped by the censorship.

Our women, however, did not silently bend before these persecutions; they simply, and without much noise, went abroad to study in the German and Swiss universities, which about that time opened their doors to ladies. A woman, as a rule, can live upon very little, and a Russian lady student knows to perfection the art of reducing her needs to a very low minimum. And yet it will be a puzzle to many, how could Russian girls manage to go through a five- or six-years' course at a Swiss university, working hard, and having no more than twenty rubles—that is about \$10—a month.

A great impetus was given to the whole question by quite a personal step, taken by Madame Conrady. She seized the opportunity of the first Congress of Russian Naturalists and Doctors at St. Petersburg, in 1867, to address to that gathering a memorandum upon the necessity of higher education for women. The memorandum was read at a public meeting of the congress, and excited great enthusiasm, both among men of science and the public. The congress transmitted the memorandum, with its full approval, to the ministry of public instruction. No reply came for a full year. Then a new memorandum, covered this time by 400 signatures, was addressed to the dean of St. Petersburg University, Professor Kessler. The women asked the old dean to take their cause in his hand. All they wanted was the permission to open regular university courses for ladies in the halls and laboratories of the university, in the evenings or at any such hours when they would not interfere with the work of the students. They undertook to cover all expenses themselves.

The dean's reply was very sympathetic, but it took almost two years to obtain from the ministry of public instruction the permission to make a public start. In the meantime the ladies organized a number of drawing-room lectures, in various parts of the town, for those girls who were not quite ready to begin university studies. Besides, in 1868, they opened pedagogical courses, with the idea of preparing teachers for girls' schools and of giving pedagogical instruction to future mothers, and these courses were soon attended by from two hundred to five hundred women.

At last, in December, 1869, the reply came. The permission was given to open, not at all a women's university, but "lectures for persons of both sexes" in history, Russian literature, physics, organic and inorganic chemistry, botany, zoology and geology, anatomy of man and physiology. The program of these courses had to be the same as in the university, but the full course in each subject had to be completed in two years. That meant even less than half a university. Nor could the lectures be delivered in the university, where the students might have had access to the laboratories. A censorship, which must be considered shameful even for Russia, was applied to those courses—the professors being placed under the obligation of sending detailed syllabases of their lectures to the state secret police. Very often they had to wait months before the approval would come. And finally, the students received no degrees and no rights whatever. This reply brought with it much consternation and disappointment; but, after a hot discussion at the general meeting, the ladies decided to accept the mutilated gift, such as it was.

At last on the 20th of January, 1870, the first of the "lectures for persons of both sexes" took place. The lectures had to be delivered in the evenings; and in order to do some laboratory work the students had to seek refuge in various laboratories, which could be had only on Sundays when they were not wanted for their own students. And yet women flocked to these lectures; in the first year the attendance reached 740.

Knowing how poor most of the girls were, the yearly fee was reduced to about \$2.50, and yet many had to be freed from the payment of even that modest sum. The government contributed only \$500 a year. A society was consequently organized by the lady initiators to support the courses, but it was not allowed to raise public subscriptions through the press. All the business part of the courses was conducted by a committee of ladies, and a

better organization of these matters could not be desired, although the number of students steadily increased, so as to reach 1,027 in 1889. These courses became a purely women's institution when they were removed, in 1874, to the lecture rooms of a girls' gymnasium whereto men had no access. Those who wanted to get a complete university education or a professional training surely could not be satisfied with these "lectures," and many women went to Germany, and especially to Zurich, where they could study and work at the university and at the admirable polytechnic school without any restrictions. Over a hundred Russian women were at Zurich in 1872; and how they studied may be seen from the most eulogistic memoir issued by the Zurich professors in defense of the admission of women to the universities. The Russian government received many a warning from different sides about the emigration of Russian women abroad, and it grew alarmed by the reports which it received from Zurich. The ladies there, it was said, came in contact with socialists; they became socialists and revolutionists, and joined the International Labor movement. Whereupon the government issued its famous circular ordering all lady students to return home within a year, and adding that those who should continue to stay at Zurich would not be allowed to pass any examination in Russia. But while uttering these menaces, the government was bound to make at the same time some concessions, and it promised to organize university instruction for women in Russia itself.

It did not entirely deceive the women by that promise. In St. Petersburg, at least, the previously founded lectures underwent a transformation, and were reopened in 1878 under the name of "High Courses for Women."

The institution prospered, and at one time it had more than a thousand students. The professors were highly satisfied with the students' work, and on several occasions such men of science as Mendeleeff, the physiologist Syechenoff, the botanist Beketoff, and many others expressed their satisfaction in letters and public speeches. Public sympathy supported the courses, and the society for their maintenance grew every year. Quite a set of remarkable women came out of these high courses—remarkable for a scientific work they have accomplished as well as for the high aspiration of working for the good of the country which inspired them.

This was at St. Petersburg; but the same difficulties had to be overcome, and the same successes were realized, in other university cities.

In Moscow public courses for women were opened in 1869 by a few gymnasias

teachers. Three years later Professor Guerie was permitted to open, on his own responsibility, high courses for women. All subjects which were taught at the university were permitted to be taught, on the condition that this should be an entirely private institution. In fact, the managing council was composed of women under Professor Guerie's presidency, and all expenses were covered by the students' fees and by private subscriptions.

SOPHIE KROPOTKIN.

## LENDING LIBRARIES AND CHEAP BOOKS.

Much has been written lately in condemnation of the free libraries, on the ground that they were chiefly used by those who cared only for light reading, and that the more serious books were rarely in demand. It is quite true that out of each six books taken during the year from the free library five will be novels. But it would be quite unfair to take no notice of the considerable number of more serious books that are read as well. Taking, for instance, the annual report of our Bromley Library, I see that during the last twelve months more than seven thousand books have been borrowed from the departments of "theology and philosophy," "biography and history," "travels and topography," and "laws, commerce, politics, &c." This is certainly a quite respectable figure, the more so as our library contains, all taken, only 5875 volumes in all these departments, to which 120 volumes only were added during the last twelve months. It must also be said that the very wide division of "laws, commerce, politics, &c.," which surely would have been in great demand during the last few years, is represented in the library by 260 odd volumes, and that only *live* new books have found their way to the shelves of this department during the last twelve months (as against 280 in the branch of "prose fiction").

Besides, it seems to me that the *role* of the free libraries has not been quite understood in these discussions, and that the poor reader has been unjustly censured. It would be perhaps more correct to say that the free libraries have fulfilled their function admirably, as they have developed a taste for reading, and have powerfully contributed to create a quite new class of readers, especially in the young generation. No very deep investigation is required, indeed, to show that the love of reading has greatly increased wherever free lending libraries have been opened—one has only to look attentively at the scores and hundreds of people who come every day to the libraries to take books. And if these readers have a decided taste for novels, these novels are certainly of a better sort than the penny dreadfuls or the *Police News*, which were formerly so widely read amidst this class of readers. Busy people, who have little time for reading after a day's work, must first be brought into the habit of caring for a book: in their spare time, and this is generally done by light reading. Besides, let us not forget what quantities of novels have been absorbed in youth by every one of us. Nowadays the novel is the young people's way of learning something about the world and its ways.

To create in the reading public a love for a higher order of books is certainly an urgent necessity; but for this purpose something else besides the lending library is necessary—I mean cheap editions of serious books. It is a fact that books of a serious character cannot be read quickly, and a volume borrowed from a lending library cannot be kept for months. If it takes a philosophically trained man more than a month to read a volume of Spencer or Darwin, in order that he may properly understand and assimilate to some extent the teaching, how much more necessary is it for the average reader of the free lending library to have plenty of time for the comprehension of such books?

I have often heard French working men say: "I cannot read a serious book from a public library; I must pick it up second-hand. Then I read it at my leisure, which is generally at night only, when all is quiet, when the family is asleep; and even that I cannot do every day. Very often when I am reading a borrowed book, part of it leads me to consult another book; so I try to get this second book from the library. Sometimes I can get it, sometimes not. If I succeed in getting it, and have read what I want, I then go back to the library for the first book, and as often as not it is out. No, I must have the book upon my own shelf." That is really how it ought to be.

Books of serious matter must be the property of the reader. Even to a good novel we all like to refer occasionally, and it is the same with a book of poems; but still more is this the case with a book more or less scientific. To such a book we should have the facility to refer constantly and on all sorts of occasions. It may be that we want to read a passage from it to a friend with whom we have a discussion, or we may look in the book for a point to be used in argument at a meeting, or else we are anxious to get a general idea before going to hear a lecture, or we may want to compare the ideas of one writer with those of some other writer on the same subject. Only in this way we learn to fully understand an author and to appreciate books. Good books must be a possession, if it be only to open one of them in some idle moment, to read a few lines at random, to pencil upon the margin our own observation, even though it be only to remark "How beautiful!" or a mere sign of interrogation.

The free lending libraries are undoubtedly developing the taste for books; but are English books cheap enough for the reader with small means to buy them? The stream of good books in cheap editions, published of late in this country, has been a most encouraging symptom, and the appearance of any good book in a shilling or a sixpenny edition has been greeted with delight by all serious readers. But we claim more from the publishers. First, the price of some of these books must be still further reduced, and we welcome the pretty shilling edition of Darwin's *Origin of Species*, even though we have had (since 1901 only!) a halfcrown edition of the same work; secondly, the cheap books should be of a library shape; thirdly, the cheap edition should not be kept until years and years after the more expensive one has been in circulation, as is now the case. This last is a most important point, for every keen reader wishes to have the book while it is spoken about, and while the reviews are calling attention to its merits. Furthermore, there should be the means for circulating cheap editions of serious books in the country, so that even in small provincial towns new books should be brought under the eyes of the would-be buyers. The high price of most serious books has been until lately the chief obstacle in the way of spreading good educational literature in England, and the great majority of excellent works that came out during the last half-century still remains very expensive. The English publisher seldom realizes how unjust he is, not only to the reader and the writer, but to himself, in bringing out only expensive editions of such books, which in a cheap form could be sold by the thousand instead of by the hundred. It would be extremely interesting to know the exact number of copies of the half-crown edition of Darwin's more popular works, and especially the shilling edition, that have been sold lately, as compared with the previous editions; but, failing these figures, we may perhaps take as a striking example in point the

sixpenny edition of Tolstoy's *Resurrection*: 130,000 copies of it were sold last winter, while of the beautifully illustrated six-shilling edition only a few thousand copies have been sold in the course of two years.

In France, in Germany, but especially in Russia, the publishers understand perfectly, well the advantage of cheap publications, and a vast amount of books, marvellously cheap and well printed, crowd the Continental book market. The result is that such books not only satisfy the need of the reader who is looking out for them, but they also attract those who otherwise would not have thought of buying books and of starting a little library of their own. Perhaps the greatest successes in this direction have been attained in Russia. Cheap editions of good books, both by Russian authors and as translations, began to come out in that country about forty-five years ago; and I must say that this excellent tendency was due to a great extent to the *Russian* women. At present Russian classics are circulating in numbers of cheap editions. The whole of Poushkin's prose and verse costs only three shillings in a quite decent ten-volume edition, while his separate poems and stories can be obtained at all prices beginning at one farthing. The same is true of the works of another great poet, Lermontoff. Some of these popular editions are illustrated by first-rate artists. As early as 1858, a large publishing firm, Kozhantchikoff's, began to publish at low prices very good editions of the works of the various modern authors, such as the historian Kostomaroff, the dramatist Ostróvsky, the novelist Gontchéff, and some other well-known writers. It may be added that on all these books the firm made profits, and prospered, until they undertook to publish cheap editions of nonconformist literature; whereupon the terrible censorship ruined the firm by seizing most of their editions. Kozhantchikoff's ambition was to create readers of national history by giving them Kostomaroff's *Monographs* in a cheap and nicely published edition, and in this he succeeded wonderfully: from that time Kostomftroff has been widely read in Russia. The bulky history of Solovióff, a rather dry work, originally in twenty-seven volumes, has also been republished lately in a marvellously cheap edition in eight volumes. As to the "critics," both dead and living—Byelinsky, Dobroluboff, Pissareff, Mikhailovsky—sufficient to say that every volume of these splendid writers, containing a matter of more than 420 pages, can be had for the modest price of two shillings! And of Byelinsky, for whose works the copyright has expired, there are two editions, of which the volume, same size, costs only one shilling.

Other publishers have made it their ambition to circulate cheap books of science. The Russian student can have, therefore, for a surprisingly small sum, the gems of the most recent works of all countries upon his bookshelf. Long ago he had a collection of the chief works of Charles Darwin for nine shillings. Just now a still cheaper edition has been brought out; and to judge of the value of the translation, made anew from the latest edition, it is sufficient to say that the best professors have done the work. Many years ago Buckle's *History of Civilisation* was published at three shillings, and an abridged edition at one shilling, of which more than 15,000 copies were circulated. Flammarion's *Astronomy*, with 382 illustrations and three chromo-lithographs, costs only six shillings. That splendid monumental work by Elisee Reclus, his *Universal Geography*, which reads like a first-rate

romance but is at the same time a great scientific work, was published in Russia as the volumes were coming out in France, at an incomparably lower price than in England, and it is now being republished in five- and six-shilling volumes. This is, of course, a work that every cultured household ought to possess, but the price of the English edition makes it inaccessible in this country. The same can be said about the chief historical works, (Schlosser, Gervinus, &c.), which, with but a few exceptions, are little known in England, while they are quite familiar in Russia.

The sad conditions of a severe censorship in Russia have ruined many publishers, and hinder a good many original works from seeing the light. Publishing firms have therefore to rely a good deal upon translations, and it is really wonderful to see the number of good books, well translated and well published at an extremely modest price, that circulate in Russia. The absence of literary treaties, which permits books to be translated free into Russian, certainly cannot explain this fact, because nowhere are the author's rights costly upon translations of serious books, nor is the remuneration which is paid to the translators in Russia lower than it is here. It is simply the taste for reading the best works of all European literature which has been developed in the country, to a great extent, by the cheap editions, and is maintained by the reviews. The result is that there is certainly a great deal of truth in the saying which we often hear, namely, that the Russian reader knows the literature and science of other countries better than the readers of those countries themselves.

Another important feature of the Russian publishing activity is the attention that has been given to the country laborer, the peasant. Some publishers, inspired with the desire of spreading knowledge among the peasant masses, as well as several others who are merely guided by commercial calculations, publish a mass of excellent literature and popular science in editions of hundreds of thousands of copies, on good paper, well printed, the books ranging from one to thirty kopeks (*i. e.* from one farthing to sevenpence) in price. So that for a few shillings a poor family living in the country can have a shelf of books upon various subjects, corresponding to a popular encyclopaedia, and another shelf of lighter reading for the same price. There are, of course, both at Moscow and at St. Petersburg, a number of very unscrupulous publishers who send to the villages the most objectionable publications—partly reproductions of the oldest absurd romances, and partly of the modern music-hall type. Tons of that sort of literature and cheap pictures are hurled down upon the country, and are spread there by special pedlars, who go from village to village with their loads of farthing

books and pictures. But a considerable improvement has taken place lately in that sort of literature, owing to the efforts partly of the women pioneers of primary education, who have started cheap editions of better literature, and partly of Tolstoy and his friends (the firm "The Intermediary"). This last firm alone spreads every year 1,000,000, to 2,000,000 copies of very well chosen popular literature; so that at the present moment there is a large literature of good popular publications, which would do honor to any West European country. One finds now among, these farthing and half-penny publications all sorts of admirable abridgements of the works of the best writers of all nations—in natural science, economics, geography,



agriculture, hygiene, folklore, fiction, poetry, calendars full of reliable encyclopaedic information and yet costing only five farthings, and so on. Only history is poorly represented, on account of the rigors of censorship. In short, looking through the catalogues of different publishing firms, it is impossible not to feel gratitude to those publishers who bring out such a mass of cheap good books in all branches of knowledge, and give every facility for the purchase of them, by the country readers.

Great attention is also given to the children's literature. The thinking Russian attaches the highest importance to the educational question; and both educators and publishers do their best to supply youthful readers with good books at the lowest possible price.

I can well remember Paul Bert's delightful little books coming out in Russia as soon as they appeared in France; books that lead a child in a most fascinating way through the whole range of natural science—physics, chemistry, geology, and biology. Some of these books have from 150 to 400 engravings, and they are sold at prices varying from fourpence to tenpence. And I see now that scores of similar books of popular science for the youth have been lately translated from all European languages. Quite a number of men and women in Russia make their living by such translations, or by compiling or adapting more serious works—even the most profound philosophical ones—for the young. Kant's *Philosophy*, for instance, is summed up very simply and published at ninepence. As to the European classics, they circulate in Russia as widely as the Russian classics, and separate poems, plays, and novels can be had at all prices, beginning with one farthing. Of course, there are plenty of expensive editions as well, but these too are much below the English prices. The Russian monthly review also deserves to be mentioned. It is of the same educational character as the English *Quarterly Review* and the *Westminster Review* used to be in years past, it is generally a large octavo book of from four to five hundred closely printed pages, and the reader finds there for his two shillings or half a-crown a great variety of most valuable information. There is always one novel or two by some of the best Russian writers—all novels of Turgeneff and Tolstoy having appeared first in some review. Besides the original works, there is usually a novel translated from some European language, running serially. Then comes a succession of serious articles on all manner of subjects, but chiefly philosophical, historical, and economical—the size of the review permitting it to take in elaborate articles of from thirty to forty pages. After these comes the most important portion of every Russian review, the literary criticism, in which the critic, *A propos* of a new novel or drama, discusses at some length and in an attractive style all sorts of matters pertaining to social and domestic life. The greatest educators of intellectual Russia have always been her art critics—Byelinsky, Dobroluboff, Plessareff, Mikhailovsky, and so on—each of them a philosopher and an artist himself. Finally, each review contains a detailed survey of political, social, and literary life at home and abroad. Notwithstanding all obstacles offered by censorship, the "Review of Inner Life," which was always conducted in the best periodicals by first-rate writers, has been for the last forty years an inexhaustible mine of information about all vital questions in the country. As to the "Foreign Review," the letters from Paris (once written by Elie Reclus) or the letters from England, which

have now run from month to month for some years already in a certain review, reminding one of the well-known London letters of Louis Blanc—these letters give to the Russians a knowledge of life, as it is in these two countries, such as is seldom found in France or in England themselves. It may seem paradoxical to say so, but the rich mines of information contained in British Blue-books are nearly always better known in Russia, through our reviews, than in England. Some of the reviews have lately introduced the system of publishing the works of their contributors in book form, charging the author with the bare cost of printing, and giving him all the advantages of advertisement by the review. An extremely interesting book on English politics and social life was thus published a few months ago by the *Russkoye Bogatstvo* at the remarkably low price of three shillings for a large octavo book of 560 pages, with the result that three thousand copies of the book were sold immediately. The author was well remunerated for his work, and the review has had the best of advertisements.

But where the Russian publishers excel is in the supplements which they give with the illustrated weekly papers. There is one publisher who is especially noted for that. He publishes a weekly illustrated paper, something like the German *Gartenlaube*, for which the annual subscription is six roubles and fifty kopeks, or thirteen shillings, which can be paid, if required, in three or four instalments. For this modest sum the subscriber receives not only the weekly illustrated, of which each number consists of twenty quarto pages, and a monthly fashion-book with all sorts of dress and fancy needlework patterns, but also a monthly magazine of about two hundred pages in each number, in which there are novels, poems, and popular science articles; and in addition to all that the publisher gives the complete works of some popular writer, like Turgueneff, Gogol, Gontcharoff, or Ostrevsky. This year, for instance, the subscribers receive in instalments the complete works of Tchekhoff in sixteen small octavo volumes of 200 pages each, and twentyfour volumes of another less popular novelist, Lyesk6ff. This latter, although not a writer of the first order, is still worth having in a library. As to Tchekhoff, he is, after Tolstoy, one of our best living writers, and to buy his works alone would cost twice as much as the yearly subscription to the weekly paper. In short, in the course of the year, the subscriber will receive more than nine thousand printed pages of good reading, besides a thousand pages of the illustrated weekly itself.

It may, of course, be asked, How is it possible to give all that printed matter for thirteen shillings? But the secret is in the enormous circulation of the paper, which has had nearly 200,000 subscribers ever since it gave, one year, the works of Turgu6neff as a supplement, and in the fact that the subscription is paid in advance. It must also be added! that the authors of the works given as a supplement are well paid, I am told, and the publisher of the weekly does not reserve exclusive rights on the works of these authors. All taken, this system seems to have given such excellent results that there are now quite a number of weeklies which give similarly rich supplements. Some weeklies devoted to education achieve wonders in this line.

One more example of cheap publications is the series entitled *The Library of the Primary School*. It is a series of novels, geographical descriptions, historical and natural history reading, and so on, mostly suited for young people who have only received or are receiving primary education.

The books are small and nicely illustrated, and so arranged that the subscribers receive them as they would receive a monthly magazine, but in batches of from two to five books at a time. This enables several families in a village to club together for one subscription, and they receive each month about three hundred pages of printed matter for sixpence. The books are really very pretty, with an elegantly illustrated cover, and contain no advertisements excepting one on the back of the cover, to notify that all these publications will be sent to subscribers in any part of the Empire for six shillings yearly, or three shillings the half-year, paid in advance.

There is scarcely any branch of science and art, as well as any sort of odd subject useful in life, which has not been utilized for these cheap popular editions; and this can be said too about the classics of all nations. In the Russian high schools for both girls and boys the history of foreign literature forms part of the education, and the pupils of these schools, being guided by the teacher's advice, read excellent translations of the best European literature. But, thanks to the very cheap editions, even the poorest pupil of a country primary school can have a correct notion of what Shakespeare, Byron, Goethe, Victor Hugo, and other men of genius have written, always provided that the priest is not the schoolmaster of the village.

Students' books and school books are also very cheap in Russia, as compared with the prices in this country. Sometimes I am asked to recommend a good text-book on botany, biology, or chemistry, and I hesitate about recommending Mendelfieff's book, which costs here a guinea, or an equally good book on botany, by an English author, which costs as much. In Russia, Mendelfieff's Chemistry, in two volumes, was published twenty-five years ago at the price of twelve shillings, and now it is still cheaper. It is the same with all students' books in Russia; they are from one-half to a third of the price at which they are sold in England.

The English reader will probably say to this, "No wonder! Your writers and translators are poorly paid, and altogether work is so much cheaper in Russia than it is in England"; but this would not be quite true. As far as the printers are concerned, the money wages in the printing trade are lower in Russia than they are here—at least in London and the great cities—although the difference becomes much smaller if we take the wages paid in the country towns of England. Printing, as a rule, is slightly cheaper in Russia, and therefore some English publishers have now part of their artistic printing done at St. Petersburg. But it must not be forgotten either that the machinery which is used by the large printing houses at St. Petersburg and Moscow is of the latest improved type and of the very first quality. It requires some good machinery to bring out the above-mentioned illustrated weekly, with all its supplements, admirably printed, in 200,000 copies every week; and everyone, however slightly acquainted with printing matters, will understand that no reduction in the wages would effect on the printing the economies which are effected by driving all the year round the most perfect machinery, and by issuing editions in hundreds of thousands of copies. Besides, are not the pretty shilling editions of the World's Classics (even without the usual soap and corn-flour advertisements to spoil them) the best proof that printing, paper, and bookbinding are not so awfully expensive in England,

provided the proper style of publishing be chosen, the proper machinery be used—and the intention of having cheap books be there?

As to the authors and the translators, they are not, as a rule, paid less than here, and they are often paid better. In England, occasionally, a popular novelist or an explorer—someone who makes a sensation—may get a large sum for his book; but the majority, we find, are paid less than the average Russian writer gets for his work. So that in this case the question of cheap labor may be left out. The secret of success in this kind of enterprise has lain in the demand for cheap books on behalf of a wide class of educated people possessed of but modest means, but chiefly in the initiative of a few publishers who really wanted to spread education broadcast amidst the masses, and, having begun to bring out cheap editions of favorite authors, compelled the other publishers to adopt the same system. I have named one of them, Kozhlnitchikoff, but I ought to name quite a number of men and women publishers, as well as publishing societies, who have worked in the same direction with the same intention.

These few, who began their publishing activity with the desire of spreading knowledge, and whose publishing business was increased from year to year as they saw what a rich mine they had struck by offering good, varied, and serious reading to the great public—these few have compelled the others to follow suit, and at the present time a Russian publisher is bound to ask himself, first of all, to what public he means to appeal; and if he is going to publish a book of popular science, sociology, or ethnography which can appeal to a wide circle of readers, he knows that he must publish it at a price of two or three shillings—never higher than five shillings—but that he can also reckon in return upon a sale of about ten thousand copies or more. I know that there are now a few publishers and publishing associations which do excellent work in this direction in this country as well; but there is no reason why the same should not be done on a much larger scale, not for old books only, but for new books as well, and why all the treasures of knowledge which have been accumulated in other countries within the last fifty years should not be brought out, so as to render them accessible to the great mass of the English people—why the little country towns and villages of England should not be flooded, just as the German villages are, and the Russian villages begin to be, with a specially written popular literature dealing with all possible branches of human knowledge, and sold—perhaps by special pedlars—at the price of a very few pence—not more than two or three. No amount of laws for the protection of birds and their nests could do so much as an attractively published book about birds and their habits on the cottager's bookshelf. It is not in the nature of a child to be cruel to creatures with whom he is familiar. And most certainly many branches of land culture, and small industries too, would not have been in the precarious state in which they are now if the needs of the cottagers had been approached by disinterested publishers—not merely in a mercantile or narrow chapel spirit, but with an intelligently sympathetic mind.

And now some readers of this article will surely make an ironical remark, somewhat in these words: "Well, according to what we are told, Russia ought to be the most enlightened country in Europe, but to us it seems just the contrary." To this quite natural remark I can only reply by referring the reader

to what he may find in the Russian free press abroad. He will see then that all the educational movement in Russia is very young—it dates from the abolition of serfdom only; and he will notice, perhaps even with some admiration, what a struggle the initiators of education, of libraries, and of everything that tends to progress, have had to maintain during these last forty years against the regressive tendencies of an autocratic government. Government prosecutions in matters pertaining to education and the press have been a long and great tragedy in Russian life.

*Sophie Kropotkin.*

## NEWS OF THE RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS. NEW YORK CITY.

The following letter has just been received by Rev. Dr. Stephen S. Wise, Rabbi of the Free Synagogue. It was sent by Princess Kropotkin, of Russia, to the children of his Religious school, and it will surely interest the readers of Young Israel:

5 Onslow Villas. Muswell Hill Road,  
London, N.,  
February 14, 1908.

Dear Children:

Thank you very much for your kind donation (2 pounds) for the political prisoners in the fortress of Schluesselberg, and your expression of sympathy with our friends who have been deprived of their liberty, because they struggled to gain liberty for all those who call Russia their land. These friends of ours, who are kept in the terrible fortress, in chains, in hunger, in the dark and damp cells, have committed no other crime but that of struggling to do away with a system which may be good for the few, but keeps 140 millions of people in misery and depression.

The crimes that the government of the Tzar has committed and is still committing against the people of your race, have especially been resented by those who are now kept in the Tzar's prisons, and your donation will go to men and women who have struggled to make of Russia a land where all races and every human being should have equal chances for human rights and justice.

Fraternaly yours,

(Signed) Sophie Kropotkin.

## A RUSSIAN VILLAGE

The first impression produced upon a stranger by a village in Great Russia is undoubtedly gloomy. The small, one-storied cottages have neither



A Russian Village Scene

flowers in front nor clean, white-curtained windows. They look depressingly dark. The unwhitewashed walls are built of thick logs, if there are woods in the neighborhood, or else of rough stone. The windows, of which there are never more than three, are small, with tiny panes of glass,—for glass is expensive.

The straw roofs are unsightly, as in most cases they are unthatched and are merely made out of bundles of straw held together with straw ropes. Sometimes, when fodder is scarce, it will even happen that the roofs are removed to feed the cattle, and the cottages then look still more forlorn. Many of them have only one room and a small passage, entered by two or three steps. When there are two rooms they are built on opposite sides of the passage.

The interiors are as poor as the outside. The walls are neither papered nor whitewashed, and a fourth of the room, sometimes even a third, is occupied by a large brick or beaten clay oven. The top of this is generally used as a bed for the aged or sick, and as a nursery for the children.

Two deal forms and a deal table are the furniture. These are placed along the two principal walls, and here also is fixed cornerwise a little shelf for the sacred pictures, painted in dark colors on wood, before which hangs a little oil lamp to be lighted on holy days. A small bottle of holy water, a colored Easter egg, a bunch of dried willows in bud,—a substitute for the palm,—these or similar relics complete the decorations of that side of the room.

In the corner, nearer the stove, is a bedstead, consisting generally of two or three planks fastened to the wall; there are seldom sheets or blankets on it.

This bed is reserved for the father and mother; the other members of the family sleep on the benches or on the stove. Sometimes there is a little loft made of planks fixed underneath the ceiling where three or four persons can lie. The fourth corner by the stove contains the crockery and a few kitchen utensils. Under the bed there may be a large, unpainted wooden chest, wherein all family linen and clothing are kept. The two-roomed cottages may be richer in a few articles, a brass *samovar*, or tea urn, perhaps, but this is the exception.

The village looks even less attractive than it might, owing to the absence of trees and shrubs near the houses, and the unpaved condition of the road, which in the rainy season is so deep in mud that the pigs can bury themselves up to their snouts in it. Some of the more prosperous cottagers try to add some external decoration, and here and there artistically carved porches and window shutters may be seen; but these ornaments are lost in their gloomy setting.

The village, however, is not altogether lacking in brightness. There is often a river close by with very picturesque banks and a mill, and there is always the church, built in Byzantine style and standing in the most prominent position. It is whitewashed and generally surrounded by an inclosure planted with lilacs and acacias.

The priest's house, too, is pleasant to look at, as a rule, with its garden and white-curtained windows; and if the village boasts a resident "squire," the visitor may be still further cheered by the sight of a large house, roofed with green iron and having an extensive garden and other luxuries obtainable only by the rich. Nowadays there is sometimes a school, though this rarely differs in appearance from the usual peasant's cottage, and even a cottage hospital may be found in some villages, built and maintained by the local government; but both are, unfortunately, very rare.

Nevertheless, as regards the land, the peasants in Great Russia are better off than those of many other countries, for the little they have belongs to them; their cottages and the ground at the back are their own. From time immemorial the land has been the communal property of the village. There are no private owners except the squire and the few who have bought some land from him, and the old-time custom of supplying every inhabitant of the village with some land is still strictly observed.

While woods and pastures are used in common, the arable land is divided into three parts, according to its quality, and each household is allotted a fair share in these three parts. The size of each allotment depends in the first instance on the quantity of land held by the community, and then on the number of male workers in the family. Each household cultivates its plots independently, but no hedges are grown between the divisions, only a small furrow marking them off; and for this reason Russian grain fields, although cultivated in small allotments, are well adapted for the use of steam implements.

Only poverty and ignorance prevent the peasants of Great Russia from growing their grain with modern methods and improvements. In South Russia, where the peasants are a little better off, the fields in many places resound with the whir and whistle of labor-saving machinery.





Figure 1—In Festive Dress

This system of property in land has developed a strong village organization, called the *mir*. All that concerns the village as a whole is decided by the *mir* and carried out by the community. It is not an elected body; its members are made up of all those workers who have attained their majority. Every head of a household, women included, if there is not a son of ripe age, has a voice in the assembly.

There is no voting in the *mir*, no chairman, no secretary, no special time or place of meeting. Whenever a matter turns up which concerns the whole village the men and women gather together at some place of their own choosing—in summer time this is always out of doors—and talk over the affair until they arrive at an agreement. If the subject is one of importance, the meeting will be convoked again and again until it is settled; for unanimity is

indispensable in the *mir* decisions.

Besides questions concerning the division, purchase, and renting of land, the *mir* decides about the building of churches, the opening of schools, the digging of wells, and the making of roads and bridges. It also fixes the dates for plowing, haymaking, and harvesting. When these are arranged, men, women, and children all turn out and work to the accompaniment of cheery laughter and songs. Indeed, in passing through a village when some communal work is in hand, such as building a bridge or repairing a road, one might easily fancy the villagers were out for recreation, so bright and merry do they look and so easily does the work seem to be done.

The grain fields, although cultivated separately, must all be harvested at the same time, because, when the grain is cut, the land becomes the pasture for the cattle of the whole village. The driving out of the cattle devolves upon a communal headman, who is himself a characteristic figure in the Russian village. He is generally a lonely old man, who is appointed to this post by the *mir*; and each household contributes to his food, clothing, and shelter. In some villages the *mir* builds him a cottage, in others each family receives him in turn; but the *mir* provides for his wants and punishes him for any neglect of duty.

In harvest time the fields are a beautiful sight. All the men wear straw hats and snow-white shirts and trousers belted with a gay woolen girdle, the handiwork of their women folk. The women themselves are clad in finely embroidered white linen shirts and bright-colored skirts and kerchiefs, also the result of their own industry. On any other occasion a woman might wear

some article she had bought, but when harvesting it is her pride to wear everything of her own fashioning.

Narrow as the village life may be, it still retains many good old customs. If a family is in distress through death or illness of the father, and too poor to hire labor at harvest time, help is always forthcoming. When the grain is reaped and brought home and there is nothing wherewith to entertain the harvesters, they themselves supply the materials for a feast, without which it would be considered disrespectful and unlucky to close the day.

"Bees" are an institution in the Russian village. All summer they are in full swing, especially among the women. Each one's flax is gathered and beaten in turn, the potatoes are dug and stored, and so on. But at the end of every day the evening air is full of song and dance, for in Russia they do not forget to play after work.

In fact, the village youth lose no opportunity of meeting for amusement. In the summer nights there are the national songs and dances out of doors. In winter the girls meet at one another's houses to spin, and the young men join them to sing and play games while spindle and distaff are plying.

The Russian peasants are a striking example of restricted needs and self-supply. They buy very few articles of either food or clothing. Rye bread, cabbage soup, potatoes, or a porridge of buckwheat or millet form their usual dinner. On Sunday a dish of milk or eggs may be added. From time to time a sheep or pig is killed, and then there is a little meat. Only the richer families or those who live near the great towns drink tea, the poorer having tea only when they are ill; and the only article of everyday use which they buy is salt.

The clothing is altogether homemade. Each family grows the flax out of which the women make the linen. Every woman may not know how to fix the loom, but nearly all know how to weave. That very necessary winter garment, the sheepskin, is from their own sheep, as is the woollen cloth of which the overcoat is made.

The usual costume for a man consists of a white linen shirt worn over the trousers and belted in about the waist; the trousers are of the same coarse linen and are worn with the ends tucked into the top-boots. But as a rule boots are worn only by the richer peasants, and even among them the old people keep them for Sunday wear. The general foot gear is bast

(bark fiber) shoes, the legs being wrapped in a bandage of linen or woollen, according to the season. The shoe strings keep these leg wraps from unfastening, and the trousers are tucked inside them. An overcoat with a girdle, a conical hat, and a pair of warm gloves complete the outfit.

The women's dress is extremely picturesque. They wear a white linen shirt with long, full sleeves; over this a short, colored skirt and a long apron; shoes or boots similar to the men's, but hats never; their heads are covered with a kerchief or shawl, which on Sundays is replaced by an embroidered



headdress for married women, while the girls twine bright ribbons in their own long plaits.

Nowhere, perhaps, has woman such a wide sphere of activity as in Great Russia. There she is the gardener, the dairymaid, the sheep-shearer, the spinner, the dyer, the weaver, and the sewer of the cloth when it is woven. She works, moreover, beside the man in the field, in the wood, and on the river. In several parts of central Russia the men are compelled to leave the village for many months in the year to earn a little money, and at such times all the field work is done by women. Their home industries are various and of a high quality. In the small markets of the smaller towns, which are held once a week, one sees hundreds of peasant women selling garden, dairy, and poultry produce, as well as rolls of finest linen, tablecloths, towels, fine laces, and artistic embroideries.

Yet with all these conditions favorable to prosperity, the Russian peasant is, as a rule, terribly poor. This is due to several causes. The first and most important is the smallness of the allotments, which necessitates the renting of other land, especially meadow land, for which the rent is much too high.

In 1861, when the peasants were liberated, the government forced the serf owners to sell so much land to the communes. For this the government paid, and the peasants are bound to refund this money within the next forty-seven years. But the land which the owners were willing to give up has already proved insufficient; since then the agricultural population has greatly increased; consequently the allotments have grown ridiculously small, and pasture lands are especially scarce, as the landowners retained nearly all of them. The lack of suitable pasturage is a very serious difficulty.

Although the allotments produce little, it would be possible to manage were it not for the ruinous rate of taxes. It is usual for a peasant family to pay from twenty-five to thirty-five dollars, besides all the indirect taxes, which are heavy, especially as the average income of the peasant is very small. To pay rates and taxes he sells his grain, at times, for half price, and then for nine months out of twelve the family eats bread adulterated with all sorts of things; really pure rye bread is eaten only in exceptionally good years.

Any one looking at a Russian peasant, especially at plowing time, can see that both he and his horses are permanently underfed. The man is small, his face and hair are colorless, and his expression is hopeless. Watch him at his dinner in the field; it will consist of a piece of dark, sour, unwholesome rye bread and onions washed down with a sour drink made of bran and a little flour.

His horse is not so tall as an English yearling; it is mere skin and bone. In the spring the horse does not get enough even of the old rotten roof straw. The harness is made of scraps of rope and leather; the plow is miserably small and scratches the soil just a few inches deep, over which plowing a wooden harrow will be dragged. The Russian peasant's intelligence is unquestionable. He is quick to learn new things and to adapt himself to new conditions—witness those who migrate to Siberia, where the land is free, and those who find their way to America, where there are free schools. What wonders might we not justly expect to be worked in the little villages of Great Russia by liberty and education!

The Princess Kropotkin.

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