

IN THE REAL RUSSIA

Observant Ramblings Through the Rural Districts of the Mighty Empire.

MOST UNDEVELOPED COUNTRY ON EARTH

Possessing Potentialities that May Have the Most Far Reaching Consequences.

WHEAT FIELDS TO FLED THE WORLD

'Carp' Gives a Lucid Explanation of Russia Land Laws.

HOW FIFTY MILLION SERFS WERE FREED

The Russian Peasant, His Strength and His Weakness—Russia, the Most Feopken Country in the World, Withal.

TAMBOFF, Russia, July 25.—[Special Correspondence of THE BEE.] I write this letter in the heart of the great black plain of Russia. I am two days' ride by rail south of Moscow, in the ragged little city of Tamboff, and I have been rambling for days through some of the richest lands on the face of God's green earth. This black plain extends from Poland far into Siberia. It is as flat as a floor, as rich as guano and as black as your hat. Its soil is made up of decomposed vegetable matter, and it makes me think of the richest fields of Kansas, which Senator Ingalls once told me were so good that you could thrust your arm down into them and to the shoulder and pull up from the bottom handfuls of black earth as rich as that of the valley of the Nile. This soil of the black plain is an almost natural manure. It pulverizes easily and it reaches all the way from three to five feet deep. It is the granary of Russia and has been called the granary of Europe. For hundreds of years it has produced the richest crops with no scientific farming, and today it is loaded with grain which has been produced by sowing the seed after merely scratching its surface with wooden plows. This plain is of vast extent and it could, if half cultivated, supply all Europe with food, and it forms the greatest copper of the United States in the world. It comprises, I am told, nearly 800,000 square miles, more than twice the area of the Atlantic states from Maine to Florida, and more than the aggregate area of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Kentucky. At present only a small proportion of it is farmed, and the great Russian empire is by all odds the most undeveloped country on earth today. If the conditions here were the same as they are in the United States in respect to government and the rights of property all the emigration of Europe would pour into Russia and Siberia and the markets and financial condition of all the world would be changed.

FACTS ABOUT RUSSIA.

In order to get any idea of the Russian empire and its people one must get out of the cities and travel off into the country. The Russia of today is an agricultural country, and it is among the peasants that you find the elements that are to affect the world in the future. There are more than 100,000,000 of these peasants and it is an interesting study to look at them and the vast areas of land they have to work with. Russia in Europe is an empire in itself. I have already traveled weeks in going over a small part of it, and its magnificent distances are like those of the United States. It has about two-thirds as much land as the whole United States, and this land is a vast plain bounded by the Ural mountains on the east, running from the Baltic sea to the Black sea and the Caspian, and nowhere having any hills more than 1,100 feet high. Such hills as there are, are few, and they lie north of the center of the country and make a water shed, so that from them by the most gradual fall the water runs from these both north and south. Russia is well watered, and great rivers cut their way through the land giving her irrigation and transportation facilities. The irrigation is as yet only begun, but the rivers and canals have for generations formed almost the only means of shipping goods throughout the country. It is wonderful how cheap freights are and how far reaching this water communication is. The Volga is as big as the Mississippi and it is 2,300 miles long. It runs through the eastern part of European Russia and it has such branches that it forms a trade artery for central and south Russia and Siberia. It is connected by rail with the Volga by the most gradual water by from Astrakhan to St. Petersburg, and by hundreds of its branches and connections can be shipped from the Baltic to the most out of the way regions of the country. The Don, which flows into the Black sea, runs for a part of its course not far from the Volga, and there are a half-dozen navigable rivers which go into the Black sea. North Russia is filled with lakes and streams, and it is only in the south that the lack of water is felt. Here in the great black plain a drought causes bad crops, and it was a series of droughts that brought about the famine of this year. This, however, might have been avoided by deeper plowing, for I am told that wherever the farmers plowed as deep as we do they had excellent crops.

RUSSIA'S FOUR LAND ZONES.

This part of Russia is known as the black land zone, and one gets some idea of the country in looking at it in such divisions. There is as much difference in the climate of this land as there is difference in that of the various parts of the United States, and in St. Petersburg I wore two suits of underclothing and an overcoat, while here I am roasting in my shirt sleeves. Northern Russia is covered with forests, and the bear has probably more wood than all the rest of Europe put together. From the Baltic to Moscow there is little else than forests. There are vast woods through which you might wander for hundreds and hundreds of miles and never find any signs of habitation, and which are not penetrated by railroads, and I traveled for hours from Petersburg to Moscow through woods more wild than any in America. This is known as the forest zone of Russia. It includes more than 400,000,000 acres, and takes in the most of the northern part of Russia in Europe. Below this zone of forests comes one of the most fertile and I now am, and across this is the arctic steppe zone, which is bringing forth good crops, but which needs manure to help it, and which its character is much like our western prairies. It is used largely for grazing and it grows wild grasses which are often seven and eight feet high. This zone has as much land as Texas, and it is said that Texas could feed the whole United States. I am told that the soil in that part of Russia is much like that of Texas, and when Russia is well covered by railroads this zone will be an important factor in the agricultural markets of the world. As it is now only about one-fourth of Russia already supplies the greater part of the food of Europe. Germany and the other

countries of the continent have been much affected by the prohibition of the grain exports from Russia during the famine, and it is this more than anything else that has set the Germans to studying and experimenting on our corn to see if they cannot get some combination of corn and rye which will feed their army and leave them independent of Russia. As it is they have been getting a large proportion of their rye from Russia and rye is the staple bread food of the Germans.

How Russian Lands are Divided.

The land laws of Russia are far different from those of the United States and the land is divided up in a way that is not known elsewhere. The czar owns more than half of all the lands in the empire, and a great part of the vast forests of Russia belong to the crown. These forests are managed by the officers of the crown and the wood from them is sold to the peasants either for wages or on speculation. The crown has something like 30,000,000 acres of forests, and it has a vast area of land which is leased out and which brings a regular yearly revenue. The most of its lands lie in the northern part of the country and a large per cent of them are unproductive.

Next to the czar come the peasants, who own about 37 per cent, or only a little more than a fourth of European Russia, and the remainder is held by the nobles. The state, and is being paid for on the installment plan. This peasant land is owned, not by individual nobles, but by the crown, and these villages have assumed the debt for the land which was assessed upon them at the time that the serfs were freed by Alexander II. Each village has its own land, dividing them up among themselves every few years, but never giving any one a fee simple title to his portion, but only allowing him the use of it for a limited period. There are more than 300,000,000 acres of land held in this way in different parts of Russia, or enough land to make eight states the size of Ohio or Kentucky. This land is held by about 23,000,000 owners, and the average amount of land held by each of these Russian peasants is less than thirty acres, and the rich lands the average is much smaller than this, and about Tula the Countess Tolstol told me that it was not more than three acres per person.

Poor Nobles.

The Russian nobility, who used to own nearly all of the noble lands and who still generation ago, and the peasants as their serfs or half slaves, are growing poorer and poorer. They received pay for their lands, but it was so low that they could not live on a 6 per cent revenue value of them. But they have not made money out of their sales, and they are now selling what they have left, and in the future Russia may some time become a land of small proprietors. Still as it is they still have a vast deal of real estate, and they have traveled through the farms of nobles where you could ride all day on horseback at a good Russian speed, which is about 10 miles in the world, and not get to the end of their noble estates. Some of them are as poor as church mice, and to be a noble in an ordinary European country is to have a great wealth or a great amount of culture. There are something like 1,000,000 nobles in the empire, and of these only a little over 100,000 are land holders, and of these the average holding is less than 2,000 acres. Since the serfs were freed the merchant class has been rising in Russia, and though I hear the nobles have their estates sold to them rather sneeringly they are rapidly acquiring land. This class already owns areas which aggregate more than 10,000,000 acres of the state of Indiana, and other lands are held by private companies and by the churches and monasteries. The monasteries are very rich and they own not only great unleased lands, but also town property and business blocks. One of the best streets in Moscow is owned almost altogether by a monastery, and the Catholic church does to that which it owns in some of our cities and who has the best good rents and good profits from their estates.

A Nation of Peasants.

Russia, however, is a nation of peasants. When I look at this country only as the czar, or the nobles, or the autocrat of all the Russias, and until this year few people have looked upon it as much else than a vast wilderness, a vast land of the oppressed and rather turbulent people. It was supposed, and largely is supposed today to be filled with peasants who are plotting to overthrow the government, and who are dissatisfied with their condition. It is known as the land of nihilism and it is thought by some that the nihilists are among the nihilists. This is a mistake. Such nihilistic elements as exist do not belong to the peasantry at all and the nihilists, the officials and the nobility form but a drop in the bucket of this great Russian population. The town and the city people number but a few millions, and the great bulk of the people live in the villages. The villages constitute the real Russia and the Russia out of which is to come the Russia of the future. Of the 130,000,000 subjects of the czar less than 20,000,000 live in towns, and the towns of Russia are numbered by hundreds. There are comparatively only a few large cities. St. Petersburg is as big as Philadelphia, Moscow is about the size of Boston, Warsaw is as big as St. Louis and Odessa is a little bigger than Cleveland. In addition to these there are a few cities of 100,000 each and then about 300 cities ranging from 10,000 up to 50,000, and about 1,000,000 of the smallest villages. There are, however, more than half a million peasant villages, and these villages contain the vast peasant population of Russia, which forms the center of the nation of the globe. This immense number of people impresses me more and more every day, and I begin to realize that these numbers may mean to me. If all the men, women and children on this big round earth could be collected together one in every ten of them would be a Russian peasant, and all the land upon the earth, they own and are scattered over one-seventh of it. Only a small proportion of these many millions live outside of the Russian empire. The Russian customs are very much the same the whole empire over. Every Russian village is a little Russia in itself, and by the side of these people one can look at one of their villages you get a fair idea of the whole empire and of this great Russian people. Of course there are Asiatic tribes, and some of the new territories, as Finland and Poland, are to a certain extent different from the pure Russians, but the great Russia is a village Russia, and the Russians as a nation are the peasants.

A Russian Village.

I was surprised during a call which I made on ex-Minister to Russia Lathrop at his home in Detroit to hear him say that Russia was the most republican country in the world. I had never heard of this before, and I governed myself. I find this to be true. Each of the 500,000 villages is a little republic. Its inhabitants elect their own officers by vote and its courts, for all ordinary offenses, are managed by judges elected by it. Every village has a little assembly of its own made up of one member to every five houses, and these men manage the affairs of the village. The village, you know, owns the land, and this assembly divides this from time to time among the people, giving each family a certain number of acres according to the number in it and according to its working power. After such a division the lands are left with the families, which they are allotted until the next division, when they revert to the village to be given out to the same persons or to others, as the assembly may see fit. This assembly fixes the dates of harvesting, the time of sowing crops, and it makes all arrangements as to the collection of taxes. The government of the czar taxes the village a lump sum, and this assembly apportions this tax among those who should pay it. No one can leave the village without the permission of the assembly or without leaving behind him a guarantee in some shape or other that his share of the imperial taxes will be paid, and a drunken zood-for-nothing is often voted out of the village entirely and his share of the village lands goes back to the village. Each village elects two petty judges, who settle all small suits relating to sums of less than \$5 and petty quarrels, and larger suits are settled by the village assembly, or by a higher court elected by a fixed number of villages and formed into an assembly called the "volost." Every thousand people among the peasants have one of these assemblies and the volost delegates to them, and all disputes among the people of these villages are brought before them and they are settled. The power of the volost, however, is limited. It cannot try cases of more than \$50, nor can it imprison for more than seven days. In addition to these two petty courts there are trials by jury, and these courts made up partly by judges appointed by the czar and partly by those elected by the people, and an appeal can be taken from this to the higher courts at St. Petersburg and Moscow.

W. G. ES IN OMAHA AND LONDON

A Comparative Statement Largely in Favor of American Mechanic and Laborers.

PAIN SHOWING OF FACTS AND FIGURES

It May Cost a Trifle More to Live in Omaha than It Does in London, but Wages Are Much Higher Here.

In these hot days of political strife much is being said of the comparative wages of mechanics and laborers in Great Britain and America. Short of its political significance the subject is a most interesting one. It is a gratification to know that American artisans and laborers are better paid than those of any other nation, and the actual figures demonstrating this fact will be interesting to all classes of people. The Bee presents for the consideration of its readers a comparative showing of the wages paid in Omaha and London for identical work, together with a further showing of the purchasing power of that money in providing for the sustenance and support of the mechanic or laborer and his family. It is a London contractor who has granted an additional sum over and above his contract price, and that it had been done on account of an unforeseen increase in wages, though, with the exception of a single instance, the increase is as yet a prospective rather than an actual one, as the new scale will not take effect for the trading season until November, the bricklayers being the only class which is already enjoying the sensation of an increase in pay.

Wages Paid to London Mechanics.

The pay of bricklayers has gone up and they are now receiving nine pence an hour instead of nine pence, the wage they were getting until three weeks ago. The increase is equivalent to a cent an hour and one-half hours it means a difference of that number of cents per week. It will be seen, therefore, that the earnings of a first class London bricklayer, providing he works full time, are \$10 less the raise, as against \$9.50 before. In winter, of course, not only is pay suspended, and at that season, when living is at its highest, he would get less than \$9 a week, even under the increase.

These Figures Speak Volumes.

While the London bricklayer gets \$10 under the new scale of pay, the Omaha bricklayer puts in an even fifty-two hours a week for his trade, and for the sum of \$32.75. He receives 10 cents an hour, and Saturday is given seven and one-half hours' pay for seven hours' work. Last year he received nine pence an hour for his work on Saturday, but this year it is fixed at the above figure. In Denver they are paid \$3 for eight hours' work; in St. Louis, 50 cents per hour; in New York, 60 cents per hour of the large cities "front men," who lay pressed brick together, are paid from \$3 to \$4 a week, and in London, 10 pence per hour, or \$1.25 a week. English bricklayers do not receive sufficient wages to make him an object of envy to his American brethren, he is better off in the amount he receives than any of the other workers in the building line, with the exception of the plumber and the "stone fitter." They each work fifty-two and a half hours a week, and on Saturday he receives \$1.50 as the fruits of their labor, while the Omaha plumber receives 40 cents for every hour he works and his regular rate of pay is \$3.75 a week. An English stone mason, gets 45 cents an hour, and receives more than double the wages paid his brother across the water.

Omaha to the Front.

London masons, carpenters and slaters are paid 9 pence, which is about 18 cents an hour, and painters 6 pence, or 16 cents. Omaha masons are paid 45 cents an hour, and carpenters from 35 to 30 cents an hour, as rough carpenters are paid 20 to 25 cents, regular carpenters 27 cents, and finishers 30 cents an hour. Omaha painters receive from 25 to 30 cents an hour for general work, grainers receiving 35 cents, fresco painters 50 cents, sign painters 45 cents, and painters of signs and decorators 35 cents. Omaha lathers receive 30 cents an hour, steam fitters 35 cents, tinners 30 cents, roofers 35 cents, gravel roofers 30 cents, hot carriers 30 cents, ditch diggers and common laborers, 25 cents an hour. For such work as scaffolding, hoisting and the handling of timber, six pence happens or 18 cents an hour is paid, while other grades of common labor receive 10 pence, or 12 cents an hour. Ordinary office clerks work in London for twenty-five shillings a week on an average, or about \$7 a month. In Omaha the rate for such clerks is \$8.25 a week, and in Omaha from \$10 to \$15 a week. Girls assisting in London stores draw \$1 to \$1.50 per week, and in Omaha from \$5 to \$8 per week. London street car men work thirteen hours a day for \$6 a week, while in Omaha they receive 29 cents an hour, making from \$9 to \$5 a month. The average wages of the 4,000 common laborers employed by the English government at a Woolwich arsenal is 12 pence, or 30 cents a week, and in Omaha for the same work, 15 pence, or 37 cents a week. The common laborer at the wharves are, from the standpoint of the lowest wages, the most miserable men under the general term of doers. These laborers are nearly all what are called casual workers, and although their standard wage is 12 pence, or 30 cents a week, they are generally employed for overtime, and irregular in their employment that they can barely average themselves, about \$100 in number, and handle the corn that comes into port. Of these, the grain manufacturer, or miller, works twelve hours, and the regular \$7.50 a week, working the same hours.

Comparative Cost of Living.

The cost of some of the necessities of life in the quarters of London inhabited by the poorer classes are at the present time as follows: A pound of mutton prime cost one penny per pound or \$7.75 per ton. Such meat as is on the market in those localities is 12 to 15 cents a pound. The cost of a bushel of flour, and their bread costs them 9 and 10 cents a quarter loaf (8 1/2 pounds). The poor apology of butter which they are glad to take, costs them 29 cents a pound, and bacon 10 and 30 cents a pound. Tea is cheap, costing from 24 to 37 cents a pound. It sometimes happens that a chicken can be secured for 45 cents, but they are generally found roasting in the market at from 80 cents to \$1.25 apiece. Fairly good roast beef costs 20 cents a pound, steaks 24 cents, and mutton chops even higher than that. A few of our most weighing nice pounds brings an even \$2.

Rentals are Nighly Against Us.

When it comes to a question of rents it will be found that the poorest apiece of dwelling in the populous districts of London will cost \$2.50 to \$3 per week. Far out from the center of London small dwellings of four rooms, with a garden, can be had for 10 pence, but to that must be added the railroad fare, which even on the workmen's trains amounts to 10 pence, or 25 cents. The weekly \$1.25 a month even after going out several miles. In London itself it would be hard to get a house of any description for less than \$11 a month.

Little Difference in Clothing.

When it comes to clothing, an inspection of any of Omaha's large clothing stores will give any sane man to ask if it is reasonable to suppose that anywhere on earth he can get an all wool suit for less than \$5. That is what he can do right here at home, and all for \$12 to 15 he can get a suit that no man in Omaha need be ashamed to wear anywhere, and that is what is paid for the greater part of the clothing that is being worn in this city today by the clerks, mechanics and business men of Omaha. Laboring men are wearing neat, well-fitting suits that cost from \$10 to \$12, and are well and substantially made. English clothes made up as well cost fully as much as those made here, and they are in the shapely, baggy and out-of-joint fashion that makes every immigrant a laughing

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stock is the reduced cost apparent. The same goods which, when cut in the American style, fitted with American exactness and finished according to the American quality of workmanship would cost you in Omaha \$45, you can get put together and hung on your back in London for \$20 or \$30, but there will be more difference between them than between two American suits costing \$45 and \$25 respectively. It is, however, possible to get a good suit of clothes in London—quite as good as can be secured in America—but the only way to do it is to go to some fashionable, high priced tailor, a man who keeps first class workmen and pays fair wages, and there a first class suit may be obtained, but the cost will be, if anything, a little more than your Omaha tailor would have charged, for exactly the same piece of goods, the same amount of care being taken and the same grade of workmanship.

Points on Progress. Chills has lady car conductors. Astor's income \$7.38 a minute. Buffalo has a Business Woman's club. American pies are popular in England. We make 2,877,000,000 cigars a year. The ashes of burned cork make fine black paint. Brick is to be made from on pped granite and clay. Grape cultivation employs 2,300,000 persons in France. A Minneapolis mill makes 15,900 barrels of flour a day. A Washington ranch has 5,000 chickens and 3,000 Japanese pheasants. A patent has been issued for a lock which can be opened only by a magnetized key. Six million dollars are invested in the manufacture of dynamite in the United States. The silk worm's web is only 500th part of an inch in thickness and some of the spiders spin a rope so minute that it would take 50,000 of them to form a rope an inch in diameter. For the first six months of 1892 the Railway Age reports new railroad construction at 1,367 miles. This shows a heavy falling off in railroad building, and is an indication of conservatism in all other speculative business.

The new navy of the United States, when all the vessels authorized are completed, will comprise forty-five vessels of all degrees, carrying 204 guns and 104 officers and men. These include five battle ships, six harbor defense vessels and three armored cruisers. The Working Girls' vacation society of New York City is now in its ninth year. Nine hundred girls were sent away last year for vacation of about two weeks each and over 40,000 excursion tickets were given to girls who could only leave the city for a day at a time. Some Scotch workmen had over all their wages to their wives, who make them an allowance for pocket money. In the course of a newspaper controversy on this subject a thrifty matron stated that she allowed her husband 1 shilling and 6 pence out of his wages, with permission to spend a portion of it in taking a dram with a friend on Saturday night. The grade-crossing problem in Philadelphia is greatly complicated by the action of the New York City is now in its sixth year. Nine hundred girls were sent away last year for vacation of about two weeks each and over 40,000 excursion tickets were given to girls who could only leave the city for a day at a time.

Tell your Laundress to use SANTA CLAUS SOAP FOR COLLARS AND CUFFS. It is the proper thing, ye know my dear boy. MADE ONLY BY N.K. FAIRBANK & CO. CHICAGO.

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Pears' Soap. People have no idea how crude and cruel soap can be. It takes off dirt. So far, so good; but what else does it do? It cuts the skin and frets the under-skin; makes redness and roughness and leads to worse. Not soap, but the alkali in it. Pears' Soap has no free alkali in it. It neither reddens nor roughens the skin. It responds to water instantly; washes and rinses off in a twinkling; is as gentle as strong; and the after-effect is every way good. All sorts of stores sell it, especially druggists; all sorts of people use it. Pears' Soap is like a peach. It is Madame Euphrasie's bleach. Not but baby's mama's cheek. Volumes to its praise do not speak. Call for Mrs. Ripper's book, "How to be Beautiful."

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