

HER MAIDS OF HONOR

RUSSIA'S ACADEMY WHERE THEY ARE TRAINED.

Learn Humility Among Other Things— Must Be Able to Sew, Read Aloud for Hours and Stand for Indefinite Periods.



Speaking of the Russian schools, there is one academy at Moscow which is unique in its way. I am sure that a similar institution does not exist in any other country, says the Philadelphia Times. It is a school for young ladies of high birth, whose parents desire that they shall become maids of honor at the imperial court. The English queen has only six or eight maids of honor, and I believe the royal attendants of that description are even fewer in number at courts where there is a queen regnant, queen regent or queen consort of first-class rank. Of course, by "queens" I also mean "empresses." All the reigning consorts who have the imperial title are also queens. Empress Elizabeth of Austria is also queen of Hungary; Empress Alexandria of Russia is queen of Poland; Empress Augusta Victoria of Germany is also queen of Prussia and Queen Victoria is also empress of India.

In Russia there are several institutions which retain an oriental flavor, and the fact that the czarina is always surrounded by an imposing bevy of unmarried women is a case in point. At least fifty young women, all the daughters of great nobles, pay her personal service. They are in two ranks, "cipher" and "portrait," distinctions which I will presently explain. Candidates for the position of maids of honor to the empress have their names registered by a court official, whose title might be translated as "overseer of the maids." This is often done a day or two after the birth of the aspiring young ladies. At the age of 16 they enter the official school of the maids of honor and there they are taught everything pertaining to the court, as well as everything that goes to make a well-educated young gentlewoman. The girls must acquire the art of legible writing and be able to correspond fluently, not only in Russian, but in English, German, French and Italian. They must be able to take dictation in all those languages rapidly. They are also expected to become familiar not only with the routine etiquette of their own and foreign courts, but they must learn rules of precedence, delicate distinctions of rank and other intricacies of court life, almost impossible to explain to those who have not been born in the atmosphere of the purple. Future maids of honor are also required to be not only clever at embroidery but capable, if necessary, of ordinary domestic stitching. While in attendance there are always possibilities of a ready needle being required for the empress or a grand duchess. They are expected to know how to order a dinner and how to direct cooks in the way of preparing dishes favored by imperial personages. They must have a capacity of being able to read aloud for hours if necessary, without undue fatigue; of being able to stand for indefinite periods; of being able to receive snubbings, scoldings, even abuse with patient composure, and finally they must inculcate within them the fact that an empress or grand duchess is a personage almost divine in attribute.

All these accomplishments acquired, or apparently acquired, it remains with a maid of honor lastly to be of such favor in her features, her general appearance and her dress that she enforces attraction from the empress or from one of the other half-dozen grand duchesses of Russia, who are permitted to have the second pick of the maids of honor, after the czarina has finished her own appointments. Before, however, such appointments can be rati-

oned, the czar himself inspects the candidates. Indeed, at various periods the czar makes a point of visiting the school and generally "looks over" the girls.

The czarina's maids of honor enjoy a barbaric splendor of costume that far exceeds anything to be seen at any other European court. A white satin robe stretches from chin to toes, the buttons up the front being set with precious stones. Over this is thrown a sort of red velvet cloak, embroidered with gold and having long pendant sleeves. On their heads rests the kakochnik or national cap of crimson velvet, thickly studded with jewels, from the summit of which hangs a veil of white tulle that spreads half way over the voluminous train. This gorgeous array is donned on all state occasions until the wearer passes from the "cipher" to the "portrait" stage of promotion. The juniors wear for some years on their left shoulders the monogram of their mistress worked in pale blue silk, but after a period of service they substitute for this the portrait of the empress framed in brilliants and exchange their crimson and gold for a less radiant cap of green and silver. While receiving their education they wear plain woolen frocks, with frilled silk aprons, but these dresses are so contrived that the upper part of the bodice and the long sleeves can be removed at will. Whenever the czar visits the schools all the girls appear décolleté.

Establishing Its Identity.

Miss Vassar—Who is this Rushin' the Growler I hear spoken of?

Miss Wellesley—That's the Russian Bear, I suppose.—Up-to-Date.

WESTERN SKETCHES.

He Didn't Yearn for Wealth.

"But a man kin make money very fast in this town if he likes," remarked the Oklahoma man, in a casual sort of manner.

"I suppose so," put in the stranger at once, with an earnestness that showed he was eager to be let into the secret of it.

"Yes," rejoined the other; "I saw a man here the other day make a thousand dollars almost at once, ye might say."

"Indeed!"

"Fac', sir; he was a stranger, just like you—I don't know what he comes from or arytin' about him mor'n I know about you; but anyhow he comes here, sir, an' he gits in with some o' them thar insurance agents over to the station yonder, an' gits his life insured to onc't, d'ye see?"

"I see."

"Yes, gits his life insured an' then, sir, out he comes and begins shoutin' his politics around right straight. Oh, he was business, he was, I-tell ye! Well, sir, 'twaren't mor'n half an hour from the time that fellow landed at the station a poor man till the insurance company was writin' out a check fer a thousand dollars fer his widder. It was the sharpest thing I ever see. Deng if I ever see such a plan! did you?"

The stranger agreed most cordially that it was a sharp trick, indeed, but added as he rose to see when the next train would leave there that, unfortunately for him, he didn't have any politics at all, and, what was more, he had no wife. "Besides," said he anxiously, "I'll—I'll tell you straight, I don't crave wealth at all just now."

He Ran Up Against a Dude.

"Jest stow them traps fur me, Jake," requested One-Eyed Hank as he passed his personal arsenal over the bar, "till I call fur 'em."

"Whater yer strippin' yerself fur, Hank? Sick?"

"Naw, tough as a mustang, but I ran up ag'in a new kind er game. Ther's a tenderfoot dude down ter th' hotel spoutin' fur gold. Free silver's my long suit, so I sets 'em up all 'round so's ter git inter th' play. I puts in my bluff, but th' dude kin chfn 'bout sixteen ter my one, an' I hain't 's good as a two spot on the showdown. I knowa I'm trimmed, so I comes th' ole

nodge, an' when he says I'm— I claims he calls me a liar. Jest as I'm goin' ter open th' ball he yanks off his goggles, ketches me slder th' head an' knocks me th' whole length of th' joint. Afore I kin pull Red Mike gits th' drop on me an' says I can't shoot no man what hain't armed, but ef I war lookin' fur a rough-an'-tumble he'd referee th' derbate. Gimme 'bout four inches o' sarpint juice an' I'm goin' back to contin'e th' argyment, fur they hain't no man kin best me in a free-fur-all."

Half an hour later Hank returned, looking as though he had been tattooed with an ice-pick and so limp that a man at each arm was necessary.

"Did you do him, Hank?" asked Jake, with a look of wonder at the toughest man in the diggings.

"Never touched him. Couldn't git anigh him. Thought he war a mark, but he knocked me down faster'n I could count. Every time th' dude hit me I wished it war a mule kickin' me, or jest a ord'nary man thumpin' me with a club. I'm suthin' of a all-'roun' scrapper, but that thar 's kin whip all the fellers like me you can load on a freight-train goin' down grade. He licked me squar', Jake, an' I want yer ter give it out straight ter th' boys that I'm a goldbug."

Music in Boomtown.

From the Boomtown Boomerang: The musical and literary evening given by the Sageville orchestra, with lady soloists, in the hall over Bud Hickey's saloon last eve, may well be called a howl-in'-g success, each number being greeted with loud howls for more from the audience. It is many a day since we have heard so much music ripped out of a fiddle as Prof. Orlando P. C. Pugsley ripped out of his fiddle last night, and his accomplished and good-looking lady wife pounded some of the sweetest melody out of the piano that we ever heard pounded out of any piano. She just made it get up and hump, and in the duet for two persons that they played together it was nip and tuck when it came to jerking the sweetest music out o' the two instruments. Such dash, smash, crash, bang music ain't heard every day in these parts. Then there wasn't anything slow about the accordion and flute duet by the professor's two daughters. Every foot in the house was keeping time before the young ladies had played three minutes and some of the limber-legged young folks even got up and waltzed up and down the aisles. But when the whole orchestra of nine pieces got in its work the audience went wild, and if anyone thinks Boomtown ain't cultivated up to appreciatin' good music they'd just ought to have been in Hickey's hall last night when that orchestra jerked out "Sally and the Ham-Fat Man." Talk about your Boston Symphony orchestras and Boston being the musical center of the country; 't's all poppycock! There's as much musical taste to the square inch here in Boomtown as in any town in America, and we'll engage to lick the man who says it ain't so. And when it comes to vocal singing, Miss Sadie May Yawp, who sang "The Gypsy's Warning" last night, knocked the socks clean off a woman named Nordica we heard sing jack east last winter. It ain't often a bang-up concert company strikes Boomtown, but it gets appreciated when it does come.

A little ammonia in tepid water will often and cleanse the skin.

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