



BLESSING THE ICONS.

The Rev. O. Nemolovsky, of the Russian Church in Philadelphia, blessing two little pictures which have been brought to him and are to be seen at the right and left of his head.

**RUSSIANS REVERE ICONS.**

*Part These Pictures Play in Religious Life of the Nation.*

"Port Arthur to be saved by an icon," was the mystifying headline which appeared in a newspaper recently. The dispatch reported that an icon had been sent from St. Petersburg to Port Arthur, but just how it was to save the fortress was not clear from a reading of the dispatch, and would not be to one unacquainted with the worship of the Greek Catholic Church, the state church of Russia. The icon plays an important part in the religious life of the Russian and it is probable that two or three could be found in the possession of nearly every Russian family landing at Ellis Island. The icon has the place of honor in the home, and is to a Russian Catholic what an image which has been blessed is to a devout Roman Catholic.

In the early history of the Christian Church there were many discussions and conflicts between religious leaders as to the attitude of the Church toward the second commandment. The icon is the Greek Church's way of getting around the prohibition of graven images. Everything represented on a flat surface is permissi-

ble. An icon is a religious picture. The subjects usually represent some event in the life of Jesus Christ or in the life of the Virgin Mary, Russian saints, with their appropriate symbols, and copies of certain local pictures of saints. One of the requirements of the Church is that the icons must be inscribed with the name of the personage depicted. The pictures may be

mosaics, bass-reliefs, enamels set on brass or gold, oil paintings or prints. They are to be found everywhere, in public offices, in the shops, in the public markets and in every private house, and are considered not only an indispensable ornament, but an accessory in the worship of the Greek Church. A picture in order to become an icon must be blessed by the priest.

The family worship is usually directed toward an icon fastened on the eastern wall of the house. At the entrance to the church, perhaps, will be found another icon on a pedestal. Over this the Russian bends and touches his lips to the double picture there spread before him.

Icons are worn on the person as well as hung on the wall. The personal icons are of brass or of gold, according to the position of the possessor. They may be merely a plaque or they may be a little book of two or three leaves. When a peasant is about to send his son to service in the army, he often opens the bosom of his blouse and takes from his neck the icon that he and his forefathers before him have worn. Pronouncing a benediction, he suspends it on his son's breast. Whenever the young soldier looks at it or feels its movement upon his breast under his clothing, his thoughts are brought back to his country, his family and his religion. When about to offer his prayers in some quiet corner, he pulls out his triptych or diptych, whichever it happens to be, and opening it kneels before it as before a portable altar. If he returns safely to his home he often celebrates the event by hanging the cherished possession upon the iconostasis, or screen in front of the altar, in his village church as a votive offering to commemorate his preservation.

Every regiment has its icon. This is carried aloft as one would carry a banner when the regiment goes into battle, with the expectation that it will aid in giving success to their arms.

Stories are told of the marvellous preservation of certain pictures, which suggested that they be made icons. Such a story is told of the origin of the icon of the Iberian monastery on Mount Athos. This picture is said to have been cast into the sea by a pious widow to preserve it from the insults of the iconoclasts of the early Christian era. It was recovered two centuries later, according to the legend, its location being indicated by a fiery column that stood over the precise spot where it had been cast.



KISSING THE ICON.

Icons are often placed on pedestals in Russian churches for the worshippers to kiss as they enter.

law courts. He said that Peter, at the end of his inspection, said:

"These men are all lawyers? What can be the use of so many? I have only two in my empire, and I mean to hang one of them as soon as I return."

**DAGGERS WITH HISTORIES.**

Senator Quay, of Pennsylvania, was a collector of Indian relics, and took great interest also in autographs, coins and stamps. Often, though, he ridiculed, good naturedly, collectors' hobbies.

He was showing a reporter his Indian robes one day. The young man took up a curious antique dagger that lay on a buhl table.

"This dagger must be very old," he said. "Has it a history?"

"It has indeed," said Senator Quay. "It is the dagger that Macbeth thought he saw. A descendant of Macbeth gave it to me in Scotland several years ago."

Senator Quay smiled. "There is only one dagger I would trade this for, and that is a dagger that used to hang on the wall in Alphonse Karr's study," he said.

"Karr, in one of his stories, had poked a good deal of fun at a woman named Colet. Mme. Colet, enraged at being made a butt of, stabbed Karr. He, on his recovery, hung the dagger she had stabbed him with above his desk, with this inscription beneath it:

"Presented to Alphonse Karr—by Mme. Colet—in the back."

**AN EXAMPLE OF TRUE LAZINESS.**

President Clowry of the Western Union Telegraph Company holds that laziness, more than alcohol or anything else, is responsible for the failures that men and women make of their lives.

"Take the tramp," said President Clowry one day. "What is the tramp's dominant trait? Is it not laziness? You may say the tramp is fond of liquor. Well, I answer that he is fonder of idleness. He could swim in liquor if he would work for it. But he will not work.

"All failures are lazy. But the laziest failure is the tramp. A tramp knocked at the back door of my cousin's farm in Vermont one hot afternoon.

"Lady," he said to the cook, "will ye spare a poor feller a drink of water?"

"Certainly," she answered. "Here's a tumbler, and there's the pump."

"Thank you, kindly," said the tramp. "And now, if you'll just work the handle we shan't be long."

**HEARD IN A PICTURE SHOP.**

Jesse Lewisohn is a collector of pictures. The other day he was conversing with Robert Henri, the painter.

"Art galleries and exhibitions," Mr. Lewisohn said, "are interesting places to haunt. I wish I had noted down all the odd comments I have heard in them.

"Only last week I stood behind two young women from the country in a Fifth-ave. picture shop. One of them called the other's attention to an atrocious animal piece.

"Two Dogs; After Landseer," she read from the frame. "I can see the two dogs, but where is Landseer?"

"The other young woman studied the painting closely.

"Where is he?" she said. "I guess this must be one of them puzzle pictures."

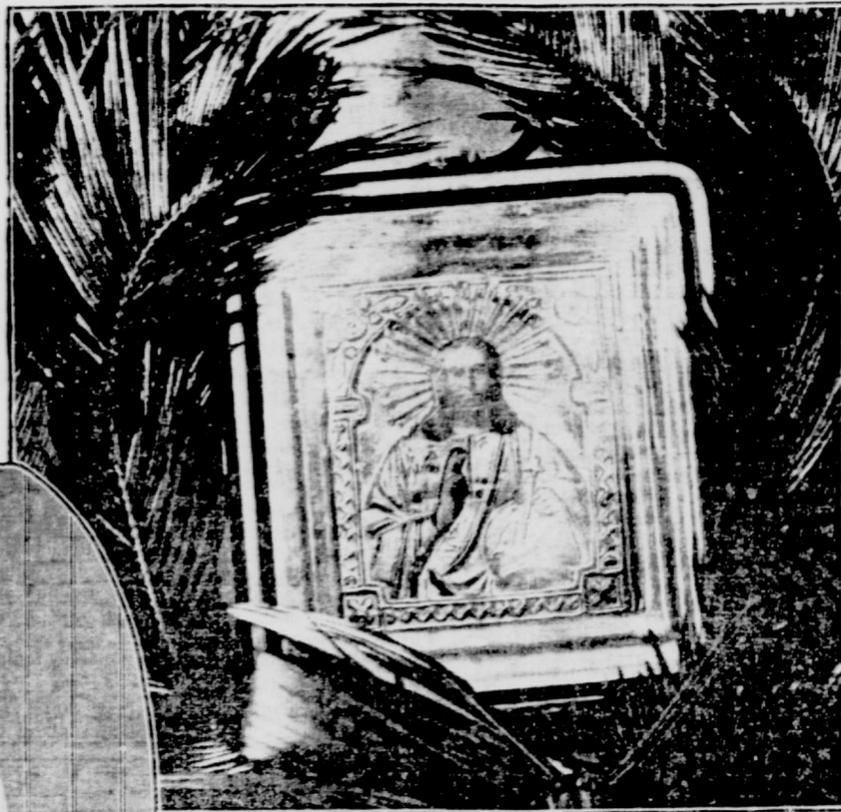
**A MATTER EASILY UNDERSTOOD.**

A. H. Hummel, the lawyer, was dining with a group of actors.

Apropos of a certain breach of promise suit, one of the actors exclaimed:

"I can't understand how an honorable woman can jilt a man and at the same time keep the engagement ring he gave her."

"That is very simple," said Mr. Hummel. "The woman has changed her opinion of the man, but she admires the ring as much as ever."



AN ICON IN THE HOME.

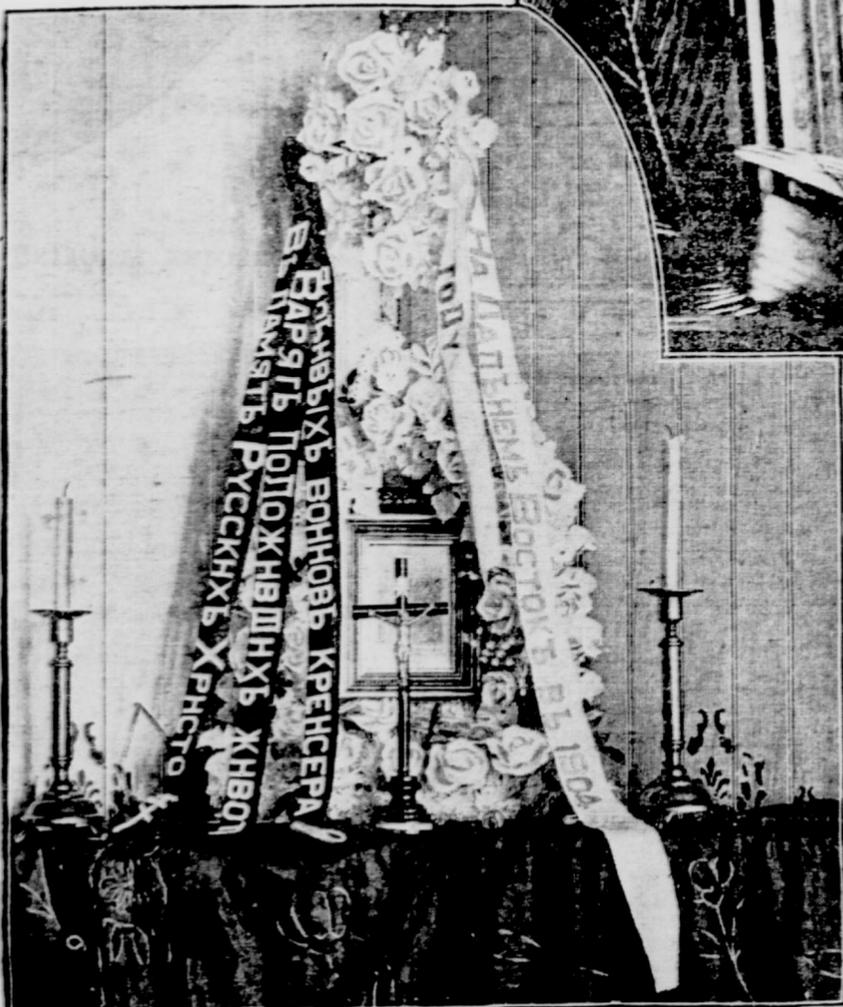
A Russian family icon is often thus surrounded with palms or candles or crucifixes.

The Russian adherents of the Greek Church in this country are showing their loyalty to their native land by praying before the icons in their churches in New-York, Philadelphia and elsewhere for the success of the Russian arms, and are setting up new icons in memory of the loss of the Variag and other Russian vessels. The interior of the Russian church in Philadelphia has about it a suggestion of a gallery of cheap pictures. On the walls are a number of pictures, large and small. They have been carried there to be blessed, and in many cases have been left because the owners did not care to move them again until they themselves moved.

**HARD ON THE LAWYERS.**

Jacob H. Schiff, who was instrumental in bringing a part of the Japanese war loan to America, was talking to a reporter about his recent European tour.

"London's courts of law have always interested me," he said, "and I revisited them last month for about the tenth time. One Q. C. whom I happened to meet there told me how Peter the Great had once gone through the



A MEMORIAL ICON.

This has been placed in the Russian Church in Philadelphia in memory of the men who lost their lives on the Variag.