

# SCENES IN TROUBLED RUSSIA

## By Frederic J. Haskin

St. Petersburg.—Having exhausted his long list of questions without being able to prove his apparent suspicion that I was an enemy of the czar, the grandiose official stamped my passport, collected his fee, and I was free to enter troubled Russia. That is, I was free to start to enter. Before proceeding I must pass the customs, which meant that I had to be locked in a big room with a lot of heavy browed, brutal looking inspectors, who grimed my collars and papers with their dirty fingers, and turned my socks wrongside out in an ostensible search for bombs or revolutionary documents. Inasmuch as the inspection revealed no infernal machines nor dangerous credentials, I was asked to pay another fee and then released. The one certain outcome of contact with Russia officials is that you will be taxed. I believe you could hardly ask a Muscovite government to employ the time of day without having to pay for the information.

We crossed the border under lowering skies which proved to be a portent of gloomy weeks to come. The ride across Poland would be depressing under any circumstances, but at this ominous time even the most stout-hearted could not escape a feeling of apprehension. There is something about the dreary, empty stretches of lowlands and clusters of ramshackle villages that savors of sorrow, and makes a direct appeal to one's pity. You do not have to be familiar with the previous story of this desolated land to know that you are entering the domain of misery.

**The Jew With the Scar.**  
On the station platform a pallid, scant-clad Jew shuffles in the snow as he looks wistfully at the car windows. Across his drawn, white face there is a livid scar, and near by a Cossack paces his beat with his ready sword dangling at his heels. It requires no vivid imagination to understand how the Jew got his ugly mark. He undoubtedly has an intimate, first-hand knowledge of the horrors of the massacre. All day long the clumsy train rumbles slowly onward through the silent, desolate land, stopping now and then at little stations where the groups of sullen loungers only accentuate the feeling of oppression that prevails. Well has it been said that Poland is the mother of grief.

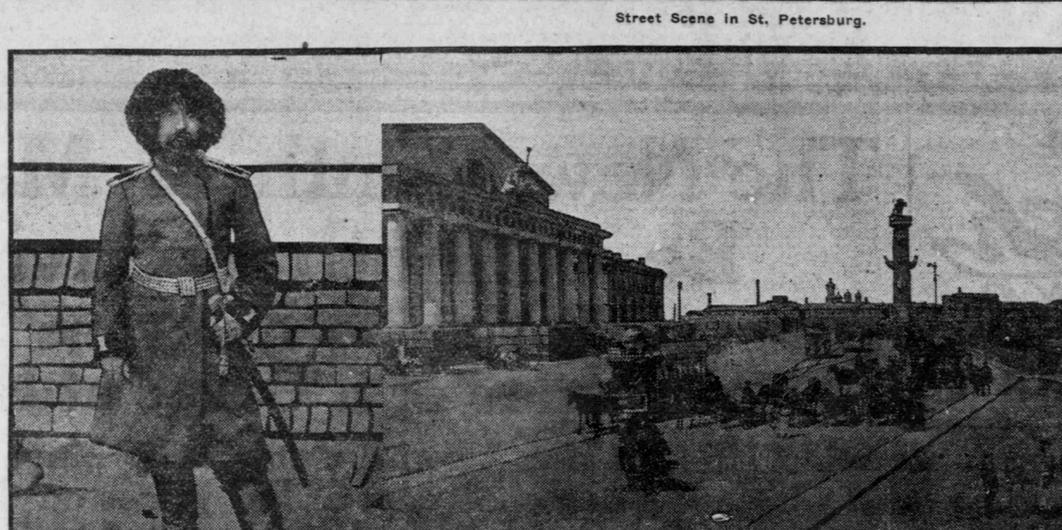
The train ran into Warsaw before daylight and I was rudely awakened by the porters storming my apartment and beginning a desperate fight for the possession of my baggage. At first I felt some concern for the safety of my effects, but as the battle of strength between the burly contestants proceeded, I lost interest in my luggage and became apprehensive for my own safety. It developed that I was in no danger so long as I kept out of their way, but I had some difficulty in retreating because the partition against which I was pressed refused to give way, and there was no means of getting out through the roof or the floor.

**Poor Devils Were Hungry.**  
After big Orloff had beaten off the other contestants for my patronage, he was confronted with another difficulty. In trying to carry out all my luggage at once he found that the door was several sizes too small, but nothing daunted, he "bucked the line" again, with the result that the handles were pulled from three of the bags. The enterprise of station porters in all countries is so noticeable that travelers have a word marked upon it, but for an exhibition of muscle, accompanied by absolutely no intelligence, the dull-witted Slav beats them all. When I got up town to the hotel, which was built with money earned in America by Ignace Paderewski, the Polish piano player, I heard the manager exclaiming the ruffianly behavior of the porters by saying "the poor devils were hungry."

One can have no conception of the great size of Russia until he begins to travel through it, and familiarizes himself with the maps and time tables. The domain of the czar contains about one-seventh of all the land in the world, which is equal to an area greater than all the territory won by Alexander in his conquests or the solid dominion built up by Rome. It is surpassed only by the British empire. The extraordinary size of the country is shown by the dimensions of the forty-nine provinces into which it is divided. We find that even the smallest of these is considerably larger than the state of Maryland, that over half of them are larger than South Carolina, and one comprises more territory than there is in the great state of Texas. The distribution of the population throughout Russia is just the reverse of what it should be. The district that outranks Texas in size has fewer people than there are in the three principal cities of the Lone Star state, while two of the smaller sections, neither of which is larger than Maryland, have more people than there are in New York and Chicago.

**Railways Avoid the Towns.**  
It often appears to the traveler that the Russian railways studiously avoid the towns. Your ticket may read to a certain place, but on arriving at the station you may find yourself several miles from your destination. There are two reasons for this one being that the land within or adjacent to a municipality is valuable, so the railways are built where the right of way is less expensive. Towns that have an ambitious population are supposed to build toward the line. The absence of healthy competition is the other cause for neglecting the comfort and convenience of the passengers. There is one railway in Russia, however, which was constructed strictly on a "bee line." When the engineers were surveying the route from St. Petersburg to Moscow they realized the advantage of having a direct line tapping centers of industry, and planned accordingly. But Peter the Great wanted a direct line between the two cities, so he called the engineers before him, placed a ruler on the map, drew a straight line in red ink between the two points—and the "bee line" was built 400 miles through the wilderness. That was more than 200 years ago, but the country still so sparsely settled that even to this day the engineer seldom has to bother about blowing the whistle for crossings.

One distinctive phase of railway travel in Russia is the small amount of attention you receive if you fall to bribe the attendants, and the amount of it you may have if you feel like paying for it. I found this out from experience. I had a reservation in the first class sleeper, but when I wanted to retire I found that no bed clothing had been provided. After considerable delay in finding what was the matter, I was told that the porter would be glad to furnish them for one



Street Scene in St. Petersburg.



Stock Exchange in St. Petersburg.

Cossack With His Ready Sword.

dollar. The fact that my ticket called for first class service counted for nothing. The porter said he was poor and had a large family to provide for. A fellow traveler remarked that if I wanted a pillow and blanket I had better pay. It is impossible to enter a complaint in such cases, because all the employees are in league to extort whatever they can from the public.

**A Remedy for Thieving.**  
My fellow traveler was a resident of St. Petersburg, and he said that even the fire chief of the city would call at his residence every year and demand \$10 for the protection of the department. Even the messenger boy bringing a telegram expects a small fee, and unless it is paid he will likely retaliate by destroying messages in future. On one occasion when some exceptionally audacious incident of official rascality was called to his notice, Peter the Great threatened to hang every man who should thereafter steal as much as would buy a rope. In response to this threat the procurator general frankly and truthfully replied that if His Majesty should actually carry out his intention he would eventually be stripped of every official in his service. "We all steal," said the procurator, "the only difference being that some of us steal larger amounts and get them more openly than others."

Although official dishonesty is still universal in Russia, the administrative system is hedged about with so many complications and formalities that detection is almost impossible. One chief protects another and all join in plundering the public. While there are a few transactions which are honestly conducted, even the most trivial matter is reported with ponderous accuracy. For instance, I was told about the formality connected with the pairing of a stove in the residence of a governor general. It would seem that a man of such high rank might have the authority to spend a few cents, but this is a matter of bureaucratic Russia. Before that stove could be repaired it was necessary for

## A STAG DINNER

BY CORNELIA C. BEDFORD.

Men enjoy eating quite as much as women do, and it is not unusual to find that the man of the household would like to give a dinner to his friends and associates at a time when the women are conspicuous by their absence. When this occurs it is possible to plan a fairly elaborate menu for the occasion, and the dinner until the guests return to the parlor, and often she need not appear at all. The following menu can readily be prepared with the assistance of a fairly good cook and a good waitress.

**Oysters on the Half Shell**  
Consomme a la Royale  
Lisbon Fish Balls  
Tomato Sauce  
Browned Potato Cubes with Fried Parsley  
Larded Tenderloin  
Mushroom Sauce  
Rice Croquettes  
Asparagus on Toast  
Roman Punch  
Roast Birds  
Lettuce, French Dressing  
Strawberry Mousse  
Black Coffee  
Water Crackers  
Cheese

Select the plates for the fish courses, putting those which are to be heated by themselves. The oysters should be placed on the table before the guests are seated and on each plate should be a quarter of a lemon. Salt, black and red pepper and snails dishes containing olives, pickles, pickled nuts, etc., should also be on the table. For the fish course put a spoonful of the sauce on each plate, on it stand two fish balls and pass the potatoes in a serving dish. Put two thin slices of the roast tenderloin on each plate, a spoonful of sauce over it; if the service is limited the croquettes may also be put on the plates with the oysters. Asparagus may properly be served as a separate course, putting a small slice of toast on each plate, the stalks neatly laid on this and the sauce passed in a boat. With it the punch may appear, then the birds and the ordinary American and Brie, Roquefort or some fancy brand. The coffee should be served in a separate cup.

As an accompaniment to the fish parade potatoes and cut into inch cubes. Boil for two minutes in salted water, drain and plunge in cold water for a moment. Dry on a cloth. Drop a handful at a time into the hot fat which has just been used for the fish balls, for, if it was properly heated at first, no taste will have been imparted by the oil. It will be an economy in time and work to have the butcher lard the tenderloin. See that the thin, broad muscle is carefully removed from one end. While it will vary in weight, the thickness will be about the same. Allow forty minutes in a very hot oven. This should give a rare but not underdone result, for it must never be cooked until well done. Baste three times during the roasting. Make a good brown sauce with beef stock and to a pint of it add a cupful of chopped mushrooms and simmer for ten minutes. If so fortunate as to be able to find fresh oysters cook them first for ten minutes in a little butter before adding the sauce.

For the oysters a cupful and a half of rice in salted water for five minutes. Drain, turn into a double boiler with a pint of thin tomato sauce which has been well seasoned with onion, parsley, etc. Stir occasionally while cooking with a fork and when the liquid is absorbed add a little more from time to time. The rice is tender but quite dry. Season well with salt and pepper, add a tablespoonful of butter, the beaten yolks of three eggs and two tablespoonfuls of chopped parsley and set aside until cold. Form into tiny pyramids, dip each in slightly beaten egg, roll in fine bread crumbs and, while the fish course is being eaten, fry them brown, four at a time, in the hot fat.

One bird is always allowed for one person. They are not stuffed, but a small lump of butter rolled in seasoning is put in each and they are roasted in a hot oven from thirty to forty minutes. They should be well done, otherwise the flesh will be tough.

We have the best hull and wash a quart of strawberries, drain and rub them through a fine sieve. Add a pint of sifted powdered sugar and two-thirds of package of gelatine which has been softened in a little cold water and melted over hot water. Set aside until the mixture begins to thicken, stirring occasionally to keep it from setting around the sides of the bowl. In the meantime whip one cupful and a quarter of very heavy cream to a stiff solid froth; to the whites of five eggs add a pinch of salt and beat until firm and lightly until the thickening strawberry mixture and cream are thoroughly mixed. Turn into a little dropped from a spoon will retain its shape. Turn into two wetted molds, cover tightly, bind the edges with a narrow strip of cheese cloth dipped in melted lard and bury in a mixture of finely chopped ice and salt, two-thirds of the former to one of the latter. Cover all with a heavy cloth and let stand in a cool place for fully four hours. This may be eaten in the day and when the ice has melted perceptibly a portion of the brine may be poured off and more ice and salt added.

a council of three or more to certify the repairs were necessary, and the order confirmed by several higher officials. The whole correspondence lasted thirty days and required forty-two sheets of paper.

**The Record for Red Tape.**  
Appropos of this instance of official red tape, I heard of several similar cases which occurred under British rule. Once when a pane of glass was broken in the window of the viceroy's bedroom in the official lodge at Simla, India, His Excellency had to stuff a pillow in the aperture while the public works department consumed eight days of official procedure in authorizing the repair; and a firm in Hongkong reported its correspondence sus-

pending until authority could be had from London to have a broken typewriter mended.

Turmoil in Russia is almost as old as its name. A patriot who lived a thousand years ago is accredited with saying: "Our land is great and fertile, but there is no order in it." The application of this ancient complaint to present day conditions became more apparent as we neared St. Petersburg. Our approach to the capital was quite

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Fleeing From the Cossacks.

hazardous. The rate of progress was diminished and extraordinary precautions were taken. A dummy engine preceded our train, and an endless chain of Cossacks patrolled the right of way—one for each telegraph pole. At one point we were detained for hours on account of a culvert having been blown out. The accident occurred on the outskirts of a village, and it was here that I got my first glimpse of the conditions which have caused the long reign of terror in Russia.

**The Will of the Master.**  
The workmen in a factory had gone out on strike because their employer would not consult with them concerning their grievances. Fearing that discontent might become general on account of the movement, the troops were ordered to clear the streets. The stay-at-home American, brought up in an atmosphere of prosperity and law and order, can have little idea of what such a command generally means in darkest Russia. It sounds

well enough, but what often follows in its wake ought to evoke the vengeance of an outraged God. In this instance "clear the streets in order to preserve peace" actually meant "turn the Cossacks loose on the surly dogs. Teach them to obey orders and respect the will of their masters."

That the working people were actually freezing and starving in their wretched hovels did not weigh in their behalf; that their plea for consideration was in reality the agonized cry of the famishing prompted no feeling of compassion for them—and the Cossacks charged. During the years that I have been a witness to the wrongs of the famishing prompted no feeling of compassion for them—and the Cossacks charged. During the years that I have been a witness to the wrongs of the famishing prompted no feeling of compassion for them—and the Cossacks charged. During the years that I have been a witness to the wrongs of the famishing prompted no feeling of compassion for them—and the Cossacks charged.

**Following the Cossacks.**  
When I followed the Cossacks down that blood-stained street the havoc they wrought seemed all the more pitiable because it could have been prevented. A little girl lay in the snow with her hair matted in a pool of blood. What had she to do with the scale of wages of the rights of the employer? An old man lay on his back moaning feebly as his life went slowly out. Near a corner six or eight bodies lay in a heap. A woman had recognized the body of her son among the corpses, and was tearfully beseeching the Cossacks to let her take her loved one home. But even this request was refused. They told the anguished relatives who soon fled to some place again in the afternoon to claim the bodies, but I learned afterward that all were lastly buried in one big grave. This course was followed because private funerals under such circumstances invariably play upon the outraged feelings of the distracted mourners, and frequently cause demonstrations against the authorities responsible for the unnecessary bereavement.

We hear now that the government authorities have the situation under control, but I ask the reader to remember my prediction that Russia will know no lasting peace until the wrongs of her impoverished people are righted. For centuries they have been cowed and beaten into submission by just such scenes as I have described, but there can be no forgetting nor forgiving. Somebody will avenge the little girl and the old man. The mother who was denied the body of her son will bear other boys and whisper in their baby ears the wrongs of their race. The brutal Cossacks may gloat over their greivous work, and the masters may chuckle at the lesson they have taught their helpless slaves, but in the end vengeance will come.

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