

STARVATION IN RUSSIA HAS MADE CZAR'S VICTIMS HORRIBLE EARTH-EATERS

(Mary Boyle O'Reilly, The Day Book's famous correspondent, now in Russia to investigate the alleged persecutions there of the Jews by the officials of the Czar's government, has left Kiev, where the trial of Mendel Beilis is going on, to travel through the Pale to learn, at very first hand, the life these "chosen people" lead. Her first story, printed here, reveals such shocking conditions that it seems the civilized world cannot allow them to go on.)

BY MARY BOYLE O'REILLY

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Besarabia, Southern Russia, Oct. 22.—Intuition warned us that something was wrong—horribly, verily wrong—with the house!

But what were we to do?

The horses, weary beyond effort—ourselves all but exhausted—no other inn for miles.

"Let us chance it," said I. "Remember, we have the revolver!"

In defiance of protest, remonstrance and common sense, we two, Madelaine Vesparina, a Russian woman, and myself, had set out to investigate the living conditions of the Russian pale—that borderland stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea into which the ruthless, terrible Russian government has driven the Jews, the chosen people—"chosen," alas, for new sufferings; drives them to sicken and to starve as helpless "reconcentrados" of industry!

"Speaking of the moated grange," observed Mile. Vesparini in her quaintly precise English, as her riding whip indicated the strange looking hostelry.

The shack was built of logs stuffed with reindeer moss, mildewed, leprous with lichens, a gallows-like sign standard projecting below the eaves, the solitary attic guestroom entered by an outside ladder! It looked assuredly an unpromising house of entertainment.

Our host waited in the low-browed doorway. The man was a giant even among the moujiks (peasants) of

Southern Russia. He was bearded like a prophet—or a pirate—and gaunt with cruel overwork or prolonged misery.

"Zdus nochuyu." (We will pass the night here).

"Da, da" (yes, yes), he replied.

That was all, but he lifted us from our saddles, pointed to the closed door, and thrusting his arm through both bridles led the tired horses toward the cart shed.

Impatient, we knocked and waited. From within came the sound of a woman's voice whispering, an indefinite rustling, the thud of heavy footfalls. Then the heavy door whined on its hinges and a housewife obviously nervous bade us embarrassed welcome.

The single room was reasonably clean, the tall, plastered stove glowing, a samovar alight. Before our second glass of tea the man entered.

"Piete Pietroff, at your service nobility. The horses cannot go farther. Tomorrow, perhaps"—emphatic shoulders ended the sentence.

Quietly, almost covertly, he cast a significant glance at his wife. Apparently she understood, though her face dark with anxiety, turned stolidly toward the boiling pot.

"Will the barina have kvass?"

"Da, da."

A moment and the steaming mess was served. The fragrant, nourishing white cabbage soup, which, eaten with sour black bread, sustains a hundred million moujiks who have no other food.