

“MARK TWAIN” AND THE CZAR.

A Newspaper Correspondent on his Travels—American Sovereigns Before Russian Imperialism—A Gracious Reception—Taking Tea with Royalty—Our Countrymen on their Good Behavior.

Anticipating the regular publication of “Mark Twain’s” letter to the ALTA, describing his visit to the Czar at Yalta, in the Crimea, we copy the following from his correspondence to the New York Tribune, dated August 25th:

HOW TO SEE THE EMPEROR.

The passengers on board the American steam-yacht Quaker City have been paying a pleasant, informal visit to his Majesty, the Autocrat of all the Russias, at his summer palace near this village.

The Sebastopolians said the Emperor of Russia was spending the summer at the little watering-place of Yalta, forty miles away, and warmly recommended us to take the ship there and visit him.

We had the United States Consul on board—the Odessa Consul. We assembled all hands in the cabin and commanded him to tell us what we must do to be saved, and tell us quickly.

A committee went ashore to wait on his Excellency the Governor-General, and learn our fate.

At the appointed hour we drove out three miles, and assembled in the handsome garden in front of the Emperor’s palace.

The 15-minute audience pleasantly augmented itself to half an hour, and then instead of dismissing the guests, the Autocrat of the Russias and his family transformed themselves into ushers, and led our tribe into the palace dining-room, into the library, the private chapel, the sitting rooms, private writing-room—all over the establishment, in fact, I cannot recollect half the places.

It is singular, but for the moment I forgot that before all this leave-taking occurred we were invited to the palace of the Crown Prince of Russia (aged twenty), and shown all through it with the same absence of hurry as was the case at his father’s mansion.

A beautiful park and gardens and the elegant palace of the Grand Duke Michael. The first persons we saw there were the Empress and her daughter.

The Grand Duchesse was simply dressed, and the Empress—was as gentle and unpretentious, and as ready to talk with everybody.

There was but little ceremony here. We were shown through the palace in the free-and-easy way we had already got accustomed to.

Some of us lingered in the grounds a good while, and when we got back we found the balance of the mob scattered about the reception-room and the verandahs, sitting at little tables, and drinking tea and wine and eating bread and cheese and cold meats with the Grand Duke, who ate at one table a while and then at another, and kept the conversation and the destruction of provisions going with a zeal which was perfectly astonishing in the brother of an Emperor.

Well, to cut a long story short, it was a chatty, sociable tea-party, and free from restraint.

The Captains of that vessel and of one of the Emperor’s yachts to breakfast with us.

We have visitors on board all the time, and if we only had the boundless politeness these Russians are naturally gifted with we could entertain them well.

They comprehend no word she utters, but they understand the good-will and the friendliness that are in the tones of her voice.

They all try, but none succeed so well as she,

At the end of three hours of boding suspense they came back and said the Emperor would receive us at noon the next day—would send carriages for us—would hear the address in person.

The young Grand Duke, however, went to another door and bowed at the party in detail as they passed by.

At the appointed hour we drove out three miles, and assembled in the handsome garden in front of the Emperor’s palace.

The Grand Duke Michael had sent to invite us to his palace also—both desired to visit the ship the following day with their families, the weather permitting.

Counterfeited smiles never gave place to real ones so suddenly before!

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