

with lovely flowers and plants, and two bright brass cages hung before the window, containing a bullfinch and a canary; a great tortoiseshell Persian cat, snoozed upon the hearth. Sister showed us her little room with evident pride. "The abode of an ascetic," the Matron remarked, laughing. "Or an artist?" I questioned. "You are both a little right," the Sister answered slowly. "I appreciate beauty. Simplicity combined with cleanliness, is one of its most exquisite forms—it is the only beauty for the poor." I never see wool mats and crochet antimaccassars without her words recurring to my memory.

THIS week's *Queen* contains a further interesting account of Miss KATE MARSDEN'S Mission to the Russian Lepers, with an account of her Siberian travels. Her description of the yurtas, at Lake Abungda, inhabited by the lepers, is heart-rending. She says: "At this spot there are two yurtas, about fifty ells apart, and between them some seven tombstones, as it were to prevent the poor wretches, even for a moment, forgetting that death is always at hand. When a leper dies he remains in his yurta, together with the living for the space of three days. And then consider the interior arrangement of the yurta: they are so small that the lepers are obliged to sleep along the walls on benches, without any litter, and as close together as possible, so that the feet of one touch the head of the next; some even lie on the bare ground; the overpowering stench, the severe cold, the presence of domestic animals inside the hut, and, to crown all, the corpse to add to the terrible smell from the wounds of the lepers. The body is placed in the coffin and dragged to the place of burial on a sledge by the survivors. These unfortunates were also visited by smallpox, and, of course, were left without any medical aid, as no one dared approach their huts. Without beds, and scarcely protected from the cold by their worn-out shubas, whose coarse surface only served to increase the irritation of the skin, these poor wretches were abandoned to the unresisted ravages of a new disease.

"In these same yurtas I found a girl of eighteen, who had always lived with the lepers; her mother was a leper, and the village society condemned her to live with them, although she was apparently perfectly healthy. After consultation between the ispravnik, priest, doctor, and interpreter, it was determined not to quit the settle-

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ment without first providing for the removal of this poor girl from her terrible surroundings. The ispravnik at once offered to take her himself, after she had been washed and clothed, and before leaving Vilúisk we had the pleasure of seeing her established in his house.

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"At Abungda the lepers had cows, and indeed, this was the best settlement we saw, although the yurtas were only twelve ells by five, and each held nine persons for eight to nine months in the year. In a place called Djikindia we found a man, woman, and two children almost naked. In general, men, women and children live huddled together, and more like beasts than human beings. At Abalak-kel I saw a woman who had been condemned by the society to solitary confinement for life. She had so lived already four years, only occasionally seeing her husband, who brought her food and water, and firing, and at rare intervals her children, who, however, were compelled to stand at a distance. Her sole recreation in winter was to drag her body along the snow as far as her strength permitted. When she felt well enough she would light the fire, otherwise she remained without. At another place, called Kharyalan, were three men who lived alone. They told us that they were often annoyed by a bear, which approached quite close to the yurta, but that they had a very intelligent dog, which used to draw the bear away into the wood by barking, so that it often returned almost without any voice left! They owed their safety to this animal, as they were without guns or revolvers. I heard the same story from a man at Huk-kel, who had come to beg for help. As appears from the above instances, not only are those who are suffering from leprosy immediately cast out of the village society, and condemned to live apart, but the same fate is decreed to their children, and to all those who have chanced to live for a time in their company. In some huts, hardly affording space for two, we found from five to ten, often in the greatest filth. They fed on fish oil which they drink, and the bark of trees. The terror inspired by the disease among the Yakuts prevents them not only touching the sufferers, but even approaching within a considerable distance; ties of relationship, even of father or mother, are forgotten. Occasionally this feeling of aversion is employed to get rid of members of the community who are not infected. Thus, twenty versts from Vilúisk was a child whose parents had died. His uncle, wishing to

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