

endure and to live through, during this long and far from easy journey, especially for a woman.

One great aim of my journey, which lasted over a twelvemonth, was to obtain a herb, which, according to the accounts of a traveller I had met who had been to Siberia before, cured leprosy. This herb is called *Rutshukta* in the Yakout language. Fully realizing the importance of this remedy to the hundreds of lepers scattered all over the world, I determined to go to Yakoutsk and find the herb, and with the help of the doctors, have its qualities tested.

The first information I got about the herb was quite accidental; later, I got to know its local name, and how it was first found by Bishop Dionesus of Oufa, who had been a missionary for over 40 years in the Yakoutsk Government. The herb is with me here for inspection by your honoured Society. Having important letters of recommendation, I was thus enabled not only to accomplish this journey in the Yakoutsk Government, but also to obtain official documents about the lepers; which documents I have had the honour to present to the President and Members of your learned Society for study, before giving my report. These documents, written on official document paper of the local Institutions, contain the official statements about the lepers of the Yakoutsk Government, signed and sealed by 1, the Medical Inspector; 2, the local Ispravnick (Captain of the Police); 3, the Clergy; 4, the Tchinovnick, or functionary for special service, G. SHACHOUT DINE; 5, the Tchinovnick for special service attached to the Governor of Yakoutsk, S. PETROFF, who was my interpreter whilst visiting the Velluisk Circuit, and therefore also signed the above documents.

Let me quote from the report of the Medical Inspector, M. SMIRNOFF, from which it appears that there exist 74 lepers in the Sredni-Velluisk Circuit. Amongst them one syphilitic patient, five people in perfect health, six who as yet had not been written into the official list, one syphilitic woman, and one suffering from inflammation of the sinews. Thirteen out of the lepers had been dead some time and not scratched off the list, and ten could not be found as they were hiding unknown to others. To form an idea of the insufficient organization for medical help existing in the Velluisk Circuit, it is sufficient to quote Dr. SMIRNOFF's own words; he says: "One doctor and two assistants for a population of 70,000 people scattered over an immense expanse, equal in the size to the whole of France.

"No wonder" says Dr. SMIRNOFF, "that the help the doctor can give to the villages which he passes through only when going to some inquest, is transitory and irregular, at the same time the rest of the population have no medical assistance whatever." The local population says Dr. SMIRNOFF "is in great need of medical assistance, for besides the epidemical diseases, as measles, small pox, scarlet fever, typhus, etc, the members suffer specially from syphilis inflammation of the eyes and marsh fevers, which is making great progress there."

As regards the position of the lepers themselves, to use Dr. SMIRNOFF's words, "it is more than pitiful

(woeful). In reality one is struck," continues Dr. SMIRNOFF, "at the smallest of the Yourts (huts) the lepers of Sredni-Velluisk live in, the light hardly penetrates, the air is so infected from the accumulation of dirty patients, dirt, and the exhalation of rotten fish, that one is stifled in entering them. These unfortunate people have neither bed nor linen, and their clothing consists of dirty old sheep and cow skins all in rags; in these conditions, without any change, they are obliged to live, often tens of years, until death releases them from their pain. "Not far from the Yourtas" says Dr. SMIRNOFF, "you perceive the grave with a cross on each to denote the place where the lepers bury each other.

One or two village Communities, such as the second and fourth Tougouisky, treat their lepers with more care, by placing them in better parts of the forest, and sometimes providing them with cows, but these cases are rare and far between; and even there the need of medical assistance is just the same, for often leprosy is joined with syphilis. For instance, according to Dr. SMIRNOFF's words, when inspecting the above mentioned villages, it is a fact that, notwithstanding their surroundings being a little better, the form of the disease attacking them is the very worst, so that the whole of the organism (or body) is rapidly destroyed, which gives them a dreadful appearance. This form of the disease is specially noticed in the Kirgizaistine village; according to Dr. SMIRNOFF, it is the tubercular form and has a syphilitic foundation. Not being a doctor I cannot say what kind of disease it is, but taking in consideration the fact that the disease is determined by the Yakouts and not by doctors, it is not very improbable that cases of syphilis are taken for leprosy, and syphilis patients, who might have been cured, are thrust out with the lepers and gradually die, whereas, had they been attended to, they might have been cured. Not being satisfied with the information I gathered from the official documents, I personally inspected, with the help of the doctor's assistant PARENOFF, sixty-six lepers in twelve different places, and having a medical form of questions which I had worked out with the help of the Medical Inspector at Irkutsk, we carefully questioned each leper, and then took specimens of skin. Both the sanitary records and the skin I have had the honour of presenting, with the other documents, to the members of the honoured Dermatological Society for inspection. In order to reach the lepers placed in the deepest parts of the forest, surrounded by a number of lakes, as the Viluisk Ispravnick (Captain of Police) states in his report of the thirty-first of the seventh month, 1892, we had to clear a road for about 1,500 versts, so as to have some possibility of getting along on horseback through the almost impassable forests. I had to do about 3,000 versts on horseback along this far from easy road, travelling about 90 versts a day. As we neared the leper dwellings, the road became worse and worse, these poor sufferers always being driven as deep into the forest as possible, and as far away as can be from their former houses, to prevent them ever returning. The largest number of lepers together we found by the

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