

## POOR STUPID SLAVES.

## HOW THE PEASANTS OF AUSTRIAN POLAND LIVE.

Human Beings Who Are Not Unlike Animals—What They Wear and How They Are Employed—Wherein They Differ From the Ruthenian.

My original purpose in visiting Austrian Poland was to inspect, at the invitation of a friend, the new petroleum fields of north-eastern Austria, and incidentally to study the Galician lowly.

On first reaching Cracow a hasty trip by rail to Kolomea, in the southeastern corner of Galicia, a half-day's walk from the frontier of barbaric Bessarabia, demonstrated that there was nothing of very great interest to write of these industrial developments.

An oil belt 300 miles in length and about 25 miles wide extends southeast from near Sanok, in Galicia, along the Carpathian range of mountains. It then passes between Bukovina and Hungary, and thence breaks away into the Roumanian oil fields in detached spurs of the Carpathians. It is perhaps 1,000 miles in length, and altogether forms what is known in the geography of petroleum as the "Galician deposits," and territory of the "Austro-Roumanian refineries."

Until 1881 the operations were of the most primitive character, consisting almost exclusively of "hand digging" and the "free fall" systems of sinking wells. At the date named the Canadian system of "pole tool drilling" was introduced, and rapid development, backed by English capital and operated by Galician Polish companies, resulted. All the steam power machinery is imported from England. Engineers and superintendents have been brought from the Canadian oil fields, and the tools formerly supplied from Hanover, are now made in Galicia.

The flow of oil is not to be compared with that of the average Pennsylvania districts. It becomes most insignificant when the great Russian wells of Baku are taken into account, yet it is a fairly profitable source of supply; has given employment to thousands of Polish and Ruthenian peasants, whose wages are ninety kreutzers, or about thirty-six cents per day, with a daily allowance of two sticks of cordwood for fuel; and I find the entire annual production of the Galician petroleum fields equals two-thirds of the total consumption by all Austria.

In so far as these peasant employees, who were too recently agriculturists, woodsmen and mountaineers to have lost any of their hereditary customs and characteristics, gave opportunity of study of the Galician peasantry, the large groupings of such lowly had interest. But my researches among the peasant class were chiefly carried on upon the large estates and in the purely peasant villages.

The acceptance of three invitations as guest at the homes of two noblemen and one rich gentleman farmer furnished opportunity to know slightly the aristocratic country landlords and to really see their hind or laborers and house servants as they are. The latter differ in no important respect from the laboring peasantry of the villages, save that to me they seem even more suddenly stupid and servile. At this time of the year the outdoor laborer still retains his winter clothing. He is a curious looking fellow. His hat is cut either straight across his forehead, or to a spear-like point upon it, and grows like a lion's mane about his shoulders and neck.

His head covering is a mangy fur hood, often of squirrel skin with tail dangling loosely upon his shoulders, or of sheep or goatskin with the fleece side next his head. A sort of greatcoat or robe hangs loosely from his shoulders to below his knees. This is of the skin of some animal, with the fur or hair next the body. The reversed exposed side is covered with ancient layers of greece for protection against the snow and rain. If he possesses undergarments of any sort, they are shreds of rags stuffed with chaff and straw.

He usually wears stockings of the heaviest and coarsest materials, and high legged, pointed shoes of huge proportions. For not only are precious hose protected by ropes of straw wound from above the knee to the ankle, but enough chaff and wisps of straw participate in occupancy of his cavernous shoes to provide sufficient warmth. Aside from this unique garb, his beard stands out from his face a masey, wiry *cheveux-de-frise*, in which enough straw and chaff have lodged to provide an adequate "comforter" for his face and neck.

From a dozen to a score of these peasant animals seem to be attached to every large estate. If they have quarters—except those who are married, who are provided with low, thatched wooden huts, squalid and filthy beyond description—I was not able to find them. They are "messed" like hogs from the great house kitchen in corners of the stables, and lie down at night among the other animals, with their straw ropes and hide coats for bedding, wherever they are able to find most congenial and comfortable stabling.

Serfdom is not supposed to exist in this land, but I have a well-founded suspicion that something very like it is in vogue. The wages of such laborers do not exceed an average of thirty kreutzers per day, perhaps 12 cents, although they are glad enough to get this. Each estate is provided with a steward or overseer, who, like the Irish agent, adjusts matters so that human effort is not permitted to produce more than this kind of human life is supposed to require.

He has a storehouse filled with the rude requirements of these estate laborers—coats, shoes, hose, belts, something that is called tobacco and snuff, *carriage* and vile brandy. These are issued, after the manner of our own exquisitely devilish "truck" system with miners, with such discretion that the estate laborer is in life-long debt, and is subject to the prison and lash if he attempts to escape his master and his obligation.

There are no schools or colleges for the better class of girls, and at nearly all these Polish aristocratic homes I found a *bonne*, an English governess, or both, and a French

tutor. They receive excellent salaries, live on something like terms of equality with their employers, are usually broken-down gentlemen or gentlewomen with "a literary turn" like provident Mr. Wegg, and are the most glad and grateful people on earth when chance brings a traveller like myself from the outer world of glowing activities among them.

I do not know whether to pity them or the manual servants of the household most. They live in a refined sort of Siberia in which there is scarcely a ray of lightness or opportunity for enjoyment, with the advantage rather on the side of the serfs beneath them; for the latter know only the dull, plodding, beastly darkness into which they have been born. I found one woman here, a governess, whom I know to have been a fashionable leader in the "English circle" in Berlin in 1882; while a tutor in another establishment is an Oxford linguist, who has published a creditable book in London within five years last past. Both of them begged me in God's name not to reveal their present whereabouts and condition.

Outside of the great estates, the Galician peasantry in general are of two distinct races—the Ruthenians, of Russian descent, and the Poles. Their conditions are equal, but they have many distinct characteristics. Neither actually possesses a foot of soil. Most hold their patches of ground, or huts, when they are simply cotiers and laborers, at the will of the lord; and rent is seldom collected in money, for of money they have little or none. Field products are sometimes taken in lieu of money, but rents are usually, almost universally, collected in labor, amounting to from 80 to 100 working days in each year to each man.

The Ruthenian is the tidier, thrifter, more manful man of the two. His dress is of coarse, hempen stuff, with his shirt hanging outside his trousers, with occasionally a sacklike coat made of the coarse, long hair of the mountain sheep. His feet are covered with moccasins pointed at the toes and laced from the toe to the ankle. He wears no stockings, but loosely winds his legs with cord from his ankles half way to the knees, where it binds his baggy trousers closely. In the summer he wears a straw hat, and in the winter a Lapland hood. He is a coarse, clean man, never fat, of splendid muscular development; wiry, active, alert, and by all odds the best workman or laborer in Galicia.

The Ruthenian woman has some odd ideas of dress. The material is usually of coarse linen. Her gown, which is in reality her chemise, is open from neck to knees and is belted in loose folds about the waist. Another curious and distinguishing article of dress is her woolen apron. She is never without this, but it is worn behind, never in front. She has no stockings or undergarments, but her feet are shod like her husband's—with pointed and laced moccasins. Her head, in winter and summer, is always bound in a gaudy handkerchief, but she possesses no other article of clothing whatever, except a sheepskin coat for winter use. What she lacks next her skin she makes up in ornamentation. I have counted more than a score of brass rings on the fingers of her two hands. Her earrings of hollow brass would hold enough oil to light the family fireside for an evening; and her necklace of glass or imitation coral beads, coiled a half dozen times about her by no means charming neck, is always yards in length.

The appearance and regimen of the Polish peasantry, whether laborers about the oil fields, woodsmen or agriculturists, are very different. The men are of slower action, dark, ungainly, and wear mustaches of great size and fierceness of appearance. The women are bony, hard featured, save among the very youthful maidens, with black, beady and restless eyes. Neither men nor women are pleasant in appearance or temper.

They have no distinctive dress, unless rags may become by their universal use distinctive. They are the most uncouth and forbidding lowly folk in their homes or at labor I ever met. But none are so poor as to not possess neat suits for Sundays, feast days and market time diversion. On these occasions the women appear in cottons of the most striking colors. Like Ruthenian women, they are loaded down with Brumagene jewelry, and a green, yellow, or red kerchief turbans on their heads, while the men invariably appear in black.

Often five to ten families live under one roof, but usually the *dorna*, or house which the Ruthenian calls his *buda*, is a tiny hut of one room. All the furniture in this—cots, stools, tables and chests—are handmade and almost always made by the peasant himself. There is invariably one box on which he has lavished his most loving art. It contains his keepsakes and treasures and all his kreutzers and gulden. He never relinquishes the key to this, and not even his wife knows how little or great is the store it contains.

The houses of both Ruthenian and Polish peasants are but one story high, with one room open to the roof. They are made of slabs and bits of refuse timber from the mountain mills. These bits are rudely mortised together. When the inner structure is completed, pegs are driven into the sides. Clay mortar is then thrown upon pegs and pounded until it is solid. The surfaces are then wet and worked by hand with light mallets until perfectly smooth and dry, when the huts are whitewashed and thatched. Little groups of these charmingly diversified the often dreary Galician landscape. EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

## Prayer By Machine.

One of the sights of India is Bhutia Bustee, or village, which contains a Buddhist temple, and around it are clustered the dirty huts of a filthy, but happy, people. The tall flagstaffs around the barn-like house float long, cotton streamers with printed prayers. The red-capped Lamas will turn the prayer wheels and show the images or the drum made of two Lama skulls and trumpet of a thigh bone. There are many monasteries of this sort on the tops of the mountains on the road to Thibet, all inaccessible and lonely, often containing manuscript books written in Sanskrit or Pali, of great interest and value. Every Bhutian or Thibetan has a small silver or copper box, containing a printed prayer; this is attached to a stick and says his devotions for him. All he has to do is to turn the wheel from left to right and repeat "Om Mani Padmi Om," "Hail to Thee of the Lotus and the Jewel." Should he, however, have occasion to curse, a turn or two of the wheel, the more natural way from right to left, and the curses shower out faster than a longshoreman.

## HOW TO TELL GOOD WHISKY.

The Chief Analyst of the Canadian Government Informs the People.

A 43-page pamphlet recently issued by the Inland Revenue department, under the title of "Bulletin No. 27," furnishes information concerning the quality of liquors of such an interesting and valuable character as to make it an excellent guide book for importers, retailers and consumers; and one that should be in the hands of all who desire to know the names of reliable distillers and dealers, and the way to tell high-class liquors from inferior grades. The information contained in the pamphlet is very full, and is presented in a manner that reflects credit on the Laboratory branch of the Inland Revenue department.

On page 41, referring to Scotch Whiskies, the Analyst says:—"These whiskies claim, I believe, to be produced by distillation of malted grain, or a mixture of malted and unmalted grain, in pot-stills. They are characterized when new by the very large amount of so-called 'emphyreumatic oils' which they contain. The new or raw spirit, being quite unfit for use, is aged in wooden vessels, and in the course of time, through the changes which take place, the oils are oxidized or otherwise converted into products which give the characteristic bouquet or flavor to these whiskies."

Page 53 says:—"Any volatile oils present in a liquor are carried over with the vapor of alcohol, and are therefore found in the alcoholic distillate. Such oils are, as a rule, insoluble in water and rarely insoluble in very dilute alcohol. In consequence of this when water is added to the distillate, so that its volume is double that of the liquor distilled, the oils are largely thrown out of solution, and the emulsion so produced becomes decidedly opalescent. In genuine Scotch Whiskey such oils are necessarily present. Grain spirit (alcohol) is free from these oils and gives no opalescence on dilution with water. As rye whiskey is generally made from such spirit we find no opalescence on diluting the distillate from this liquor. Six samples of artificial liquors were produced in the laboratory from patent still spirit and essences. None of the distillates from them gave any opalescence on diluting with water. It is not

unlikely where the opalescence is very slight the liquor is essentially an imitation article, to which a proportion of genuine liquor has been added. Since in every case in which a high degree of certainty exists as to the origin of a pot-still liquor a very decided opalescence has been found."

On page 34 of the report the government analyst, in reference to furfural reaction, quotes M. L. Lindet—Bull. de la Societe Chimique de Paris, tome V, p. 20. as follows:—"The presence of furfural in liquor is believed to be due to the charring of portions of the malt (or other material used) during process of distillation." Continuing the analyst says:—"In patent stills, where steam heat only is used, this charring of the contents of the still does not take place, and in the spirit produced furfural is not found. The ageing of the spirit which causes changes in the nature of most of the secondary constituents of spirits, does not apparently affect the furfural, which is present as largely in old as in new pot-still whiskies. (The analyst quotes the foregoing from the evidence of A. H. Allen before the select committee on spirits appointed by the British House of Commons 1891.)

The report furnishes on page 21 a list of the Scotch Whiskies analyzed, with the following results:—

Opalescence on Diluting Distillate.	Furfural Reaction.
Mackie & Co. .... Distinct.	Very distinct.
J. B. Sheriff. .... Distinct.	Distinct.
Bulloch, Laid & Co. .... Slight.	Distinct.
Bernard & Co. .... Slight.	Faint.
Donald Stuart. .... Slight.	Faint.
Kirker, Greer & Co. .... Slight.	Faint.
"Heather Bell" Brand, manufactured in Montreal, Slight.	Faint.
Mitchell's Heather Dew, None.	Faint.
Thom & Cameron. .... Distinct.	Very faint.
Artificial Scotch prepared in the Laboratory from Spirits and essences. .... None.	None.

Several other brands, shipped by blenders and distillers, whose names do not appear, not having been given the inspectors, are not included in this list. These, however, appear in the report in connection with the vendors' names, and are all ranked as more or less inferior to the highest grade above mentioned.

So that, according to the official report of the laboratory branch of the Inland Revenue department, the highest recognized authority in the Dominion of Canada, MACKIE & Co.'s Scotch stands conspicuously at the head of the whiskey list.—Advt.

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In like manner it is found necessary to even copy Melissa patterns and styles in the frantic effort to place imitation goods on the market.

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## WE NEITHER DEAL IN COUNTERFEITS NOR PLAY SECOND FIDDLE.

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GENTLEMEN,—We the undersigned, beg to acknowledge receipt of the sum of Fifty-five Dollars, cash, paid to each of us; being a FIRST Bonus under the terms of our Specific Tontine Policies, issued in May, 1891. These policies continue in force for the full amount, with provision for further Bonuses.

We heartily recommend THE DOMINION SAFETY FUND LIFE ASSOCIATION to the Public for reliability and promptitude.

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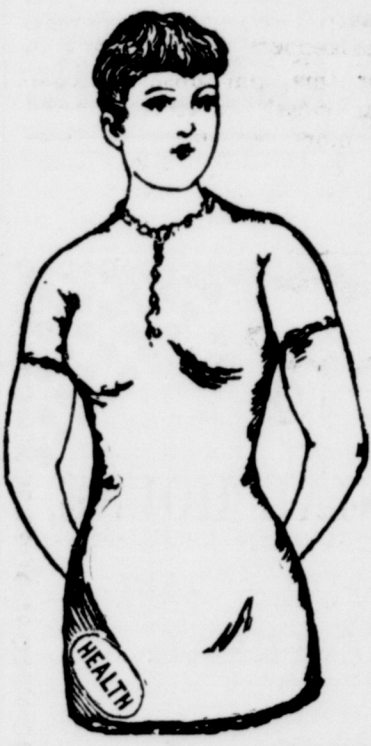
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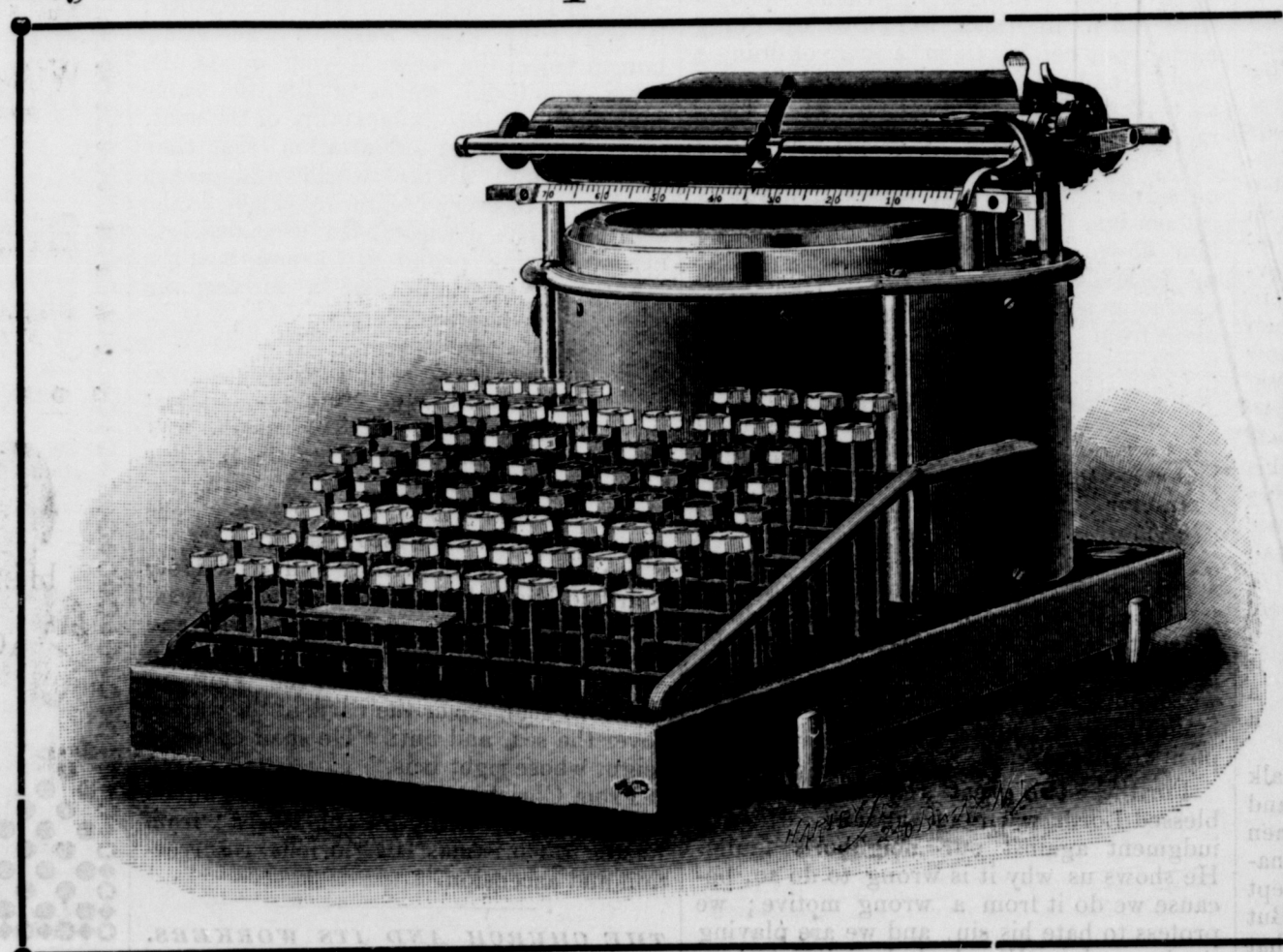
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