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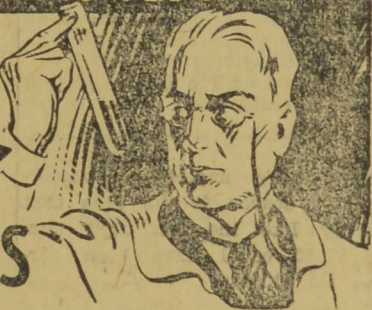
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PRIMITIVE TOOLS ARE USED ON THE BULGARIAN FARMS; WOODEN PLOWS ON THE LIST

(By Nevin O. Winter in Toledo Blade)

After a day's delightful journey down the far-from-blue Danube, our comfortable steamer, which uncomfortably overflowed with its human freight, steamed into the Bulgarian port of Widin and halted at the dock. A veritable mob of bandit-like porters crossed the gang-plank and seized the baggage that was to be taken ashore. These men were not animated by any unlawful purpose, but they were anxious to earn a small fee for performing this service to the incoming traveler. I selected a promising fellow and he carried my baggage into the customs office to await examination.

My first impression was one of amazement at the thorough manner in which the customs officials went through the baggage and this was followed by indignation as I saw the experience of the 11 victims who preceded me. Everything in the trunks, suitcases, bags and bundles were carefully examined, the officials even reaching their hands into the pockets of coats, vests, trousers and other garments in the search for contraband articles. After my number was called I stepped forward with trepidation for I had three closely-packed suitcases. I looked at the official who awaited me and casually asked him in German whether he spoke that language for I had found German more generally known than any other foreign tongue throughout the Balkans.

"Yes," he replied; "are you German or English?"

"I am American," I answered and then I found that this magic word was an open sesame here, for a change immediately came over the inspector. He simply thrust his hand in my suitcases without removing a single article and dismissed me with a smile. The others looked rather aghast at this unusual treatment, but I was glad to escape from the anticipated order. My porter then led me across the street to the passport office, for the passports had been collected by a soldier.

"Come back in an hour," was the answer to my question. Upon being informed that it was an American passport, the official immediately handed it over to me. This again was an unexpected but not unwelcome courtesy. The hotel to which I went, said to be the best in this third city of Bulgaria, was the kind that you stop at only because of necessity and which you leave without a single regret. The food was unpalatable; the proprietor slovenly and the maid even more so; the uncomfortable bed was occupied by other than its human guest.

During the whole of the day's journey from Widin to the capital, the primitiveness of Bulgaria is impressed upon the traveler. Wherever there was cultivation, the work was done in the most primitive way. Scores of men were cutting grain with sickles; others were leveling grass with scythes; threshing was done with flails and the grain winnowed by tossing it into the air; plowing was performed by oxen with women guiding the dumb animals in front. The plow was frequently a wooden implement. The grain was loaded with two-tined or three-tined home-made wooden forks. The wells had a long pole sweep to draw the water. The roofs of the houses were of thatch. The water buffalo frequently took the place of horses and oxen. Where the country was too rough for cultivation, there were herds of sheep and droves of pigs in charge of herders.

Bulgaria has long been regarded as the outlaw nation among other Balkan states. It was so before the World war; it is so today. All of its former neighbors allied themselves with the entente, save Turkey and Greece, and the sympathies of Greece were with the same group of allied fighters. Bulgaria linked her fate with the central empires and lost. As a result her former territory was shared with Greece, Yugoslavia and Roumania. Today the Bulgarians are not on good terms with the victorious countries. There has been continual friction since the treaty of Versailles. Just after my visit a joint note of those neighbors was presented to the government of Sofia protesting against the border raids of Bulgarian troops. Sofia replied that the raids were made by uncontrolled bands, whom it had been impossible to restrain. At Bucharest, when I was there, it was claimed that prisoners had been captured with papers on them, which showed the connivance of the Bulgarian government. And there the matter rests at the present time.

King Boris of Bulgaria, the nominal ruler, is generally well regarded. But the government is really in the hands of a bureaucratic cabinet. The present head is quite well regarded by foreigners living in Sofia, but the rule is at all times autocratic. When I was there the king was in Paris enjoying the sights of that gay capital. Some said he was looking for a wife, for Boris is a Bachelor. It is probably not because of lack of an opportunity to marry, for a crowned head is always in demand with ambitious mothers, if not with the young ladies themselves.

"What is the political situation in Bulgaria today?" I asked of an American official residing in Sofia.

"There has not been a political assassination since last December," was his reply, "and that seems like a good omen. Prior to that not a week passed without one or more, and at times they were almost daily. After the bomb explosion a little over a year ago, three men were publicly executed by hanging, all of them being alleged Communists. But it is claimed that at least a hundred have disappeared—escorted out into the country and shot. This bomb was thrown into a church during a celebration and the partially wrecked edifice still stands as it was left. More than 100 people were killed by this outrage.

Economic conditions in Bulgaria are in bad condition. It is today about the size of Ohio, but several thousand square miles were taken from it at Versailles. Almost 10 years of continuous war greatly impoverished the country, for Bulgaria was warring with her neighbors for several years prior to the conflagration which involved practically the entire continent. Many thousands of Bulgarians have been sent back into the country from that portion of Macedonia granted to Greece. These poor peasants, victims of the revengeful spirit that has followed in the wake of the war, reached the land of their nativity in the greatest poverty. They were without the common necessities of life and the government has been unable to succor them. The League of Nations approved a loan of \$2,500,000 to succor these unfortunates, but France raised objections unless a new agreement was made to protect bond holders for pre-war loans. In the peace treaty it had been agreed that no new loan should be made by Bulgaria without the consent of France. But common humanity would dictate the immediate granting of money, whose expenditure could be easily safeguarded.

Sofia is greatly superior to what the traveler would naturally expect after traversing 200 miles of the country. The late king sacrificed the rural districts to make his capital a rival of the western cities. Railways improved highways and modern agricultural machinery would have meant far more for his subjects. In the weekly market, however, the real populace is seen. Thousands gather here each seven days, and it rivals oriental bazaars. Fruits and vegetables, home and factory-made goods, primitive farm implements and modern contrivances horses and mules, donkeys and water buffaloes, suckling pigs and old hogs, sheep and lambs, chickens and geese, carded wool ready for spinning and yarns are exhibited for sale. Peasants in a dozen provincial costumes—Gypsies, Turks, Albanians, Macedonians, Cossacks and half a dozen other nationalities wander about making purchases or selling to others. Red, blue, pink, purple, green and yellow are prominent in the colorings and many of the dresses are adorned with gold threads. Silver contrivances ornament necks and ears. Many of the men look like pirates.

HUMAN FLY DEAD

Philadelphia, Dec. 3—"Daredevil" Johnny Reynolds, the "human fly" who made many thousands gasp as he climbed the walls of some of the tall buildings of the East, died of natural causes in a hospital here yesterday. Born in this city 38 years ago, he lived with his parents in West Philadelphia.

The Baby's Cold

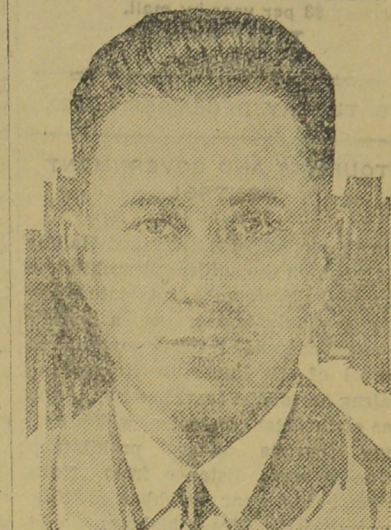


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