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The Great Novgorod

"What ^{rough} ~~rough~~ habits they have!" records Nikon's ^{ancient} Chronicle about the inhabitants of Novgorod.

Princes were afraid to go and rule the vigorous and restless Illmenians.

But Marfa Posadnitsa prophesied well: Great Novgorod has become one of the most inconspicuous, the most silent of the Russian towns.

It has become secluded.

It has lost its former aspect. Nobody now can imagine how the once mighty, picturesque and busy Hanseatic city extended many ^{miles} versts out to the Yurievsky Monastery, to Nereditsa, to Liadki. Nobody now can realize that the bare hills and hollows --the present environs of Novgorod-- were once the vital habitations of the city.

It is even difficult to imagine that the inhabitants of Novgorod-- in the past "dominated practically all Pomorya up to the Arctic Ocean and along the rivers of Pechora and Vym, and the high, impenetrable mountains in the country named Siberia along the great river Ob ^{to} ~~the~~ the mouth of the White River, haunts of wild animals and sables."

It is hard to understand how those Novgoroders came to the Caspian Sea and the Sea of Venice.

Unimaginably broad was the grasp of the "youth" of Novgorod. The youthful free man perpetually aspired and dared. The success of the free men was the success of the big city. If they failed, the elders did not mind, since it was a venture of "youth". How wise!

Wherever there was something worth-while --the Novgoroders were there. From everywhere they bore all that was worthy into the Treasury of Novgorod; kept it; hid it carefully.

It is possible that these treasures are lying buried for us there.

In the very Novgorod--in each hillock, mound and hollow--gleam traces of an incalculably distant, vast existence.

Its black earth is saturated with charcoal, chips of pottery, bits of stone and brick of all ages, chips of tile and all sorts of metallic fragments.

Walking along its streets and alleys, one can pick up under foot pieces of broken glass of the Tenth and Twelfth Centuries, bits of old Venetian smalt beads; here a coin, a piece of a small cross; there fragments of lead seals.

While looking observingly at the rich layers of the past epochs, it seems that the statement of V. Peredolsky is not exaggerated ^{when he says} that the inhabited strata of the soil of Novgorod is over seven sajens--forty-nine feet deep.

You feel you walk here on an ageless grave-yard. An ancient inhabited spot. Sacred, but superfluous to life.

Any contemporary life upon such a sacred kurgan--tomb--seems out of place and very likely Great Novgorod, not without reason, is sunken in the sound sleep of time.

It is time to turn again seriously to old Novgorod.

The conditions create collectors. But there are few of them.

The collection of Peredolsky, with his broad but confused ideas, lies hidden, whereas it would be as valuable for Novgorod as the Plushkin collection for Pskoff.

In fact it is superior to the Plushkin collection.

Such collectors should be encouraged. But the municipality has not enough foresight to make use of such collections for the expansion of its ^{preferred} preferred museums.

Do the "City Fathers" realize that for the moment they are not concerned with fisheries, forests, or granaries, but with the authentic treasures of the past of Novgorod--~~with~~ its relics of long ago?

In 1911 Great Novgorod will celebrate a festival.

After long discussions it has been justly decided to hold an Archaeological Congress in Novgorod.

The Chairman of the Congress will again be Countess P. S. O_uvarova. She understands how to arouse the people and she understands how to grasp a situation broadly. She has that which makes an "amateur" superior to a "specialist". Up to the time of the Congress, Novgorod will have to disclose much that is now hidden.

My proposal to found a Museum of the Pre-Petrian Art, initiating an all-Russian subscription, for the exploration of Novgorod and other old Russian towns, has been approved by many.

It appears to me necessary to start without delay to collect funds vigorously.

The discoveries of those explorations--there will be a vast amount of them--should go in the Museum of Pre-Petrian Art and Life. Strange as ^Jmay seem, our metropolis has as yet no such complete museum of past history in a unified form.

Special discoveries are concentrated in the Hermitage, in the Archaeological Society and in the Archaeological Institute. Small departments exist in the Academy of Sciences, in the Artillery Museum, in depositories of the University, but all ^{these are} ~~this material is~~ scattered and often inaccessible.

A historic museum, similar to that of Moscow, is needed in Petersburg. And Russia, where such discoveries are just beginning,

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should think of the materials for such a depository. Naturally, we begin with Novgorod and Kiev.

A number of societies, ^{and} several publishing houses, can participate in such a great cultural affair.

The first one to undertake the exploration of towns is the Society of Architectural Artists which meets in the Academy of Arts in Petersburg. And this is most appropriate. For, first of all, the architects should be closely associated with the investigation of towns. They are the creators of the features of the state.

The architects have been commissioned to take charge of many aspects of our affairs--therefore they should enjoy a broad public confidence.

The responsibility for the knowledge of the background and development of our cities, should be entrusted to the architects. They, above all others, should know the hidden life-wisdom of the ancient structures.

The young constructors who gather around the architectural artists, will gain strength from such historic explorations, by developing their experience ⁱⁿ and taste for the new creations.

In the second place, the Society of Architectural Artists is young. As yet it is unspoiled by any tiresome and prohibitive traditions. The Society is developing rapidly and is not afraid of new ventures. The people go gladly to the Society, and thus a worthy foundation for many great undertakings is laid.

The young Society has already succeeded in preserving and expounding much. The vigilant eyes of youth have already observed much vandalism, and have fearlessly protested against it.

The Society is patronized by Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, the new ^President of the Academy of Arts. The Grand Duchess has undertaken

the task with great ardor. She is displaying warm-hearted patronage to broad public ideals, close to every lover of national art.

Subscriptions should be begun. Response will come.
By ^{time of the} ~~With~~ the approaching Congress of 1911, the venture can ^{already yield} bear its first results.

At the end of July the Committee of the Pre-Petreaan Dopetrowsky Museum will begin excavations in the southern section of Detinitz, the location of the ~~Prince's~~ ^{of the Princes} terems and the five old temples. At the same time the excavation of the ancient town-site where the princely families long lived, could be started.

I love the region of Novgorod. I love all its hidden aspects. Everything that lies there is ^{ready for} around us.

Why is it necessary to travel to distant parts, to search the distant deserts, when right here in our own soil are buried such worlds of treasure? The Province of Novgorod has experienced everything.

Past is its valor, past is its culture, past is its confidence. Undiscovered stretches of treasure! It is ^{actually} ~~simply~~ difficult to choose where to begin.

We have such many-sided proofs. But from which shall we ^{proceed?} ~~start~~ Investigation of churches, exploration of old buildings, or excavation of cities, and the most ancient ^{remains} ~~ruins~~ beneath them?

The most stirring to our imagination is the authentic view of old churches and the excavation of ancient ruins, where each stroke of the shovel may reveal a magnificent discovery.

The Rurik site, the place of the oldest settlement, where in later times the ruling princes were accustomed to live with their families, is full of potential discoveries. In the gardens along the shore, one often discovers the most varied objects from the most recent, to the stone age, inclusive.

One ^{Senses} ~~fact~~ now after vast settlements of the Stone Age in the lower regions of Kolomtzy, at the mouth of the Volhov River in the Ilmen, the life expanded towards more elevated regions through Gorodistche, Nereditza, Liadka--to Novgorod proper.

In the regions of Gorodistche, are likely to be discovered the remains of the princely terems, foundations of churches, of which only one remains--the one built by Mstislav Vladimirovich.

What illuminating tablets of the strata of life might not be excavated from such an ancient place! It is regrettable when such discoveries are scattered through casual hands.

Besides the Gorodistche section, a number of suburban sites vie with each other ^{concerning} ~~about~~ the importance of their ancient history.

Kolomtzy, where Peredolsky ^{obtained} ~~got~~ a great many of his objects of the Stone Age, Liadka, Lipna, Nereditza, Seltzo, Rakom, (where Yaroslav had his palace) Migra, Zverintzi, Viajishtchi, Radiatina, Holopgorodok, Sokol Mountain, Volotova, Lisitchia Mountain, Kovalevo, and many other sites and cemeteries await their explorer.

But the chronicled and legendary places are not the only ones filled with their hidden treasures.

First of all, ~~I repeat~~, the city itself is filled with them. Even if we do not know what filled the deserted hillocks, through which human habitations formerly extended, yet in the boundaries of the existing city, are known many places which must have left their traces.

The Court of Yaroslavl (1030), the Court of Petrantino, ~~N~~metzki Court, Pluskowsky Court, Gotzki Courts, the Prince's Court, the Gridnitza Piteinaya, Kleimanya Seny, the Courts of Posadnik and Tysiatzky, the Grand Passage, the Court House, the Chapels of the Foreign Believers, the Granaries of lords and princes, and finally the courts of the wealthy boyars and burghers--all these places noted by historians could not disappear with ^{out} a trace.

In the foundations of all these places still lie the pre-historic strata of life.

This
~~That~~ is all unexplored.

Strange to say, even the Detinetz of Novgorod is unexplored, with the exception of a few local excavations.

However, Detinetz is very noteworthy. Its present appearance means nothing. It has been greatly changed.

But we should bear in mind that Detinetz is an ancient place, *as is* and its square, where in eternal conflict stood the court of the ruling prince, and--on the Lord's side--St. Sophia which witnessed too much.

We have records as early as 1044 that Detinetz was built of stone. The south-west part was built by *Prince* Yaroslav; the northeast, by his son, St. Vladimir Yaroslavich. They were princes of great culture! Undoubtedly they left some worthy treasures.

Briefly--the huge kurgan of Novgorod is unexcavated. One can begin the excavation from any side, according to the means at one's disposal.

Do we wish to start with restoration of churches? We have work on every side, since in each ancient church there is something worthy of restoration in the name of art.

Let us *cite* ~~what~~ *comes first to our memory* what is easiest to remember.

The beautiful Church of Peter and Paul on the Sophia side is ruined by the horrible wooden wing. The level of the temple was a whole floor lower. Its walls were undoubtedly covered with frescoes.

In the Church of Feodor Stratilat by the brook, the frescoes have been painted over. They should be uncovered.

The wall paintings in the Cathedral of Nicolo-Dvorishtche are *formerly* absolutely obscene. There were frescoes ~~formerly~~. Something of them must remain.

In the Church of Feodor Stratilat, on the Sophia side, the colored tiles are painted over.

In the Church of Blagovestchensk, in the Rurik site, the frescoes are also far from having been investigated.

In the same way the wall paintings in Volotov and Kovalev are still unstudied. In Kovalev one clearly sees three layers of paintings. The lowest layer is naturally the most interesting one.

One could mention a long list of necessary restorations in the old ecclesiastic art in Novgorod.

The list of the unrestorable ones is just as long.

Much has already been destroyed before our eyes.

The Temple of Sophia was ruined by the unsuitable work of ~~the~~ Safonov's artel. The foreigners who come are astonished at such ^{inferior} impossible decorations for a cathedral of such an order. Strange and foreign to us seem ~~to us~~ the remarkably preserved iconostases and special icons.

Not without sorrow does one recall the ruined exterior of Nereditzky Spass.

Like an orphan stands the ^{Novgorod} head on the newly built Byzantine shoulders! Absurd are the Byzantine forms with the deeply-sunk foundations. Intolerably dry look the newly renovated cornices and corners.

I look at Spass and again inwardly say to Pokryshkin that he ruined Spass. ~~His behavior~~ His behavior was un-Christian-like.

At the meeting of the Society of Architectural Artists, where I gave my report of Spass, Pokryshkin merely said: "It's a question of taste."

He is right. There was nothing else left for him to say. And

nothing to answer. What a strange poor taste!

In the center of the Spass, artists now bustle about, sketching.

I remember that during my first trips to Old Russia, I did not meet so many artists interested in antiquity.

9 Evidently the interest is growing. It is time! An accidental meeting again has prompted the need of exploration in Novgorod.

We were going to Kolometz toward Ilmen:

From the direction of Yurievs Hermitage blew a "rolling wind". The waves lashed against the side of the boat. A wave broke over-board, and flooded the boat.

The municipal boat was shaking. We beckoned to a large fishing craft. Thus we ^oailed down to Kolometz.

An old fisherman held the rudder. His daughter manipulated the sails. In her copper-colored face glittered white teeth.

We asked her: "How old are you?"

"How do I know that?"

"How is it you don't know? Think it over! Remember!"

"Don't know. Maybe over twenty."

And there sat the hardy fishermen. Such people die, but have no ailments.

At Kolometz, the old man hurried us back: "Listen to me; I'll leave you. ~~It~~ (shakes) the boat too much."

We hurried. We got in at the stern of the fisherman's sailboat, while the city boat with its oarsmen could not get away from shore.

Three oarsmen could not move it.

"Shall we help you? Sit down!" And the sturdy girl of Novgorod waded through the deep water.

She took hold of the boat, and with all its oarsmen easily pushed it into the deep water. She got out of the water into the stern.

A real Marfa Possadnitza.

Next to her, on the poop of the boat sat her father; a sturdy man with an aquiline nose; sharp, deep-set eyes; thin lips; beard in two curly tufts. And thus he looked sharply at the waves, trying to conquer and chastise them.

A real Ivan the Terrible.

Marfa Possadnitza! Ivan the Terrible! Everything became confusing. The meeting with primitive fishermen was evidently necessary for our impressions.

Such folks still live along the lakes. They seldom go to ^{the} towns. Like the soil, thus they know how to guard the words of ancient times. As with the soil--it is difficult to know when and where to begin with these people.

All is untouched. Everywhere, the luring ways of creation. Everywhere, rich discoveries.

After us will come others. They will find new ways. New approaches. But [#]no one can say that we searched in empty places. It is worth-while to work.

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