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On Sledge and Horseback to Outcast Siberian Lepers

Kate Marsden (1859–1931), the youngest of eight children from a poor family, was a highly committed nurse. She cared for soldiers in the Russo-Turkish War in 1877–8, and undertook missionary travels to various countries, but she was especially concerned about the plight of those suffering from leprosy. This volume, published in 1893, describes her remarkable journey to Siberian leper colonies. At first she travelled by sledge with a friend, but continued alone on horseback, facing appalling weather conditions with her customary courage. Her commitment to leprosy sufferers led her to found the St Francis Leprosy Guild in London in 1895, and she organised a leprosy hospital in the remote Siberian town of Vilyusk in 1897. She was made a Member of the Russian Imperial Red Cross Society, and she was also one of the first women to be appointed a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society.



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On Sledge and Horseback to Outcast Siberian Lepers

KATE MARSDEN





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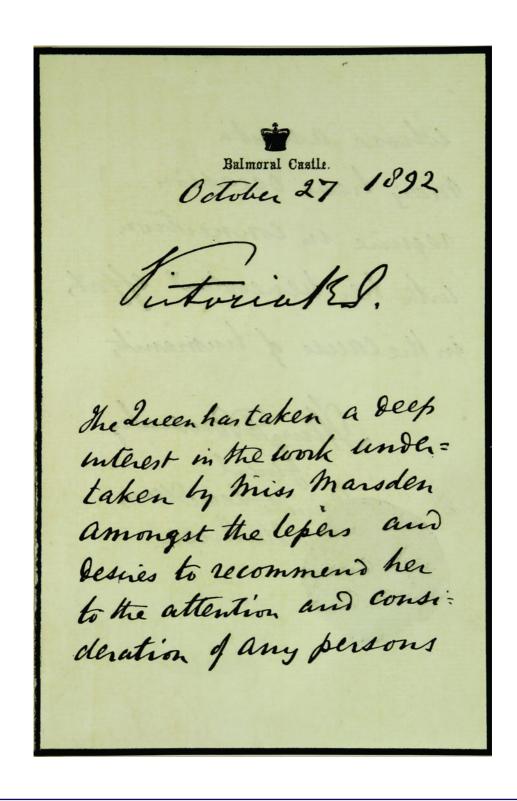
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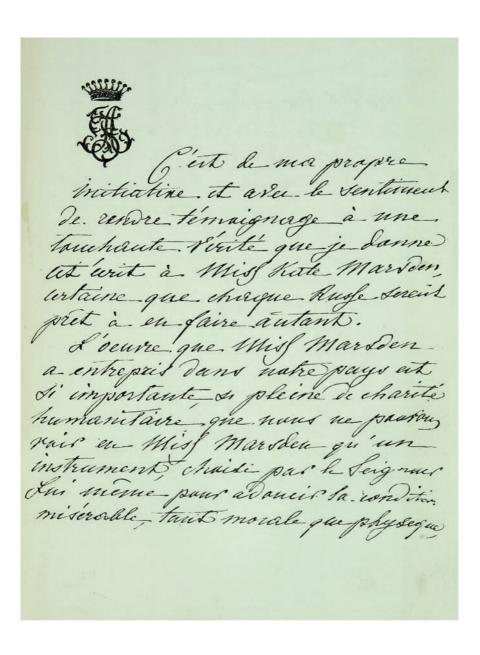




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Frontispiece.



ON SLEDGE AND HORSEBACK

TO OUTCAST SIBERIAN LEPERS.

Illustrated from Photographs and Drawings.

ву

KATE MARSDEN.

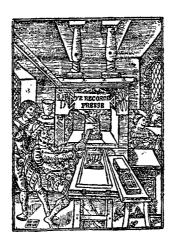
MEMBER (SPECIAL BADGE) OF THE ROYAL BRITISH NURSES' ASSOCIATION;

MEMBER AND MEDALLIST OF THE RUSSIAN IMPERIAL RED CROSS SOCIETY, etc.;

FELLOW OF THE ROYAL GEOGRAPHICAL SOCIETY.

LONDON: THE RECORD PRESS, LIMITED, 376, STRAND, W.C.







To

HER MOST GRACIOUS AND IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE QUEEN,

The most queenly woman and the most womanly Queen, whose keen sympathy with suffering has made her, personally, as beloved, as the progress of the British Empire, under her rule, has made her Throne magnificent,

THIS STORY

Of a woman's work
On behalf of helpless, hopeless, and homeless outcasts,

Is,

With the most professed respect and humble creatited

With the most profound respect and humble gratitude,

DEDICATED.





PREFACE.

The first practical step preparatory to commencing this work amongst the lepers was my presentation to Her Majesty the Queen in 1890. I sought this honour knowing that it would help me in carrying on the work in foreign countries. Three days after the presentation, Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales, commanded my attendance at Marlborough House for the purpose of hearing particulars of what I proposed to do. Her Royal Highness showed the warmest interest and sympathy, and promised to write and solicit the approval and assistance of Her Imperial Majesty, the Empress of Russia, in accomplishing the end I had in view.

At my audience with the Empress, my most sanguine expectations were realised. Her Imperial Majesty showed the utmost kindness, entered heartily into my plans, and gave me an invaluable letter, requesting Russian officials to facilitate my wishes in visiting

ť



vi

Preface.

hospitals and leper settlements in the Empire. This letter was as follows:—

"(Dated St. Petersburg, April 20th (May 2nd), 1890.)

"The bearer of this, the British subject, Miss Kate Marsden, is proceeding to India with the object of devoting herself wholly and entirely to the care of the lepers. Before her departure for India, Miss Marsden visited St. Petersburg, and had the happiness of being presented to Her Majesty the Empress. Afterwards she inspected some of the hospitals here, and has now the intention of inspecting the like in other towns and places of the Empire. H.I.M., estimating at its worth the highly Christian and sincerely philanthropic significance of the journey so undertaken by the traveller, and also all its difficulty, has been pleased to command me to hand to her these lines, that she might show them to all persons in authority in such hospitals as she may desire to visit. H.M. the Empress will be extremely grateful to the said authorities if they will give Miss Marsden their co-operation during her inspection of the hospitals in charge, especially those in which occur patients suffering from leprosy.

"(Signed) PRINCE IVAN GOLITSYN."

Again, on my return journey from Siberia, whilst resting in Tomsk, Her Majesty's unbounded graciousness was again shown by the following telegram, sent



Preface.

vii

in response to one I had the honour of sending to Her Imperial Majesty, on the occasion of their Majesties' silver wedding-day:—

"Very many thanks for your good wishes. Hope you are getting on well. "Empress."

The rest of my story is contained in the following pages; but I desire, in this place, to draw special attention to one or two further matters of importance.

I appeal to all true English-speaking men and women not to find in this book fresh causes of complaint against Russia, but to exhibit, rather, by their sympathy, a spirit of union in Christian and philanthropic work, as well as the same forgetfulness of sect and creed which was shown by our Lord in His works of love and mercy.

In our little company at Yakutsk, away in the northeast of Siberia, there were three nations and three religions represented—Russians, Yakuts, English; the Greek, the Roman Catholic, and the Protestant Churches. Most of my escort were members of the Greek Church. The ispravnick (Captain of the Police) was a Catholic, and I a Protestant. Throughout our journey there was not a word of discussion or dispute on the religious differences between us; we were all bent on reaching the lepers and being of service to them. Later, on my return to St. Petersburg, when the Greek priest up in Viluisk, beyond Yakutsk,



viii

Preface.

heard I was ill, he at once held a special service to pray for my health, the Catholic ispravnick and the principal Yakuts who accompanied me being present. The next day the ispravnick sent for the Greek father to hold another service in his house for the same purpose. The letters which I received from these men bear ample testimony to the entire absence of all bitter sentiment from religious differences.

I have never taken any active part in promoting temperance principles, but now I think that the record of my exertions in Siberia, without the aid of stimulants, may prove as beneficial to others as if my voice had been raised in furthering the cause for years past. I took no alcohol whatever throughout the journey, except on two occasions of great exhaustion, when the stimulants only made me worse. I have, therefore, good ground for recommending abstinence from alcohol where much physical endurance is necessary.

Humanly speaking, I believe I owe my life to this abstinence, and also to Jaeger clothing, without which it would have been quite impossible to go through all the changes of climate, and to remain for weeks together without changing my clothes.

I wish to bear grateful testimony to the warm sympathy and assistance given to me at the American Embassy, St. Petersburg. The assurance of America's friendship and willingness to co-operate has raised the highest hopes with regard to my American lecturing



Preface.

ix

tour, which I propose to commence at once. As Russia helped America in the past, so America can help Russia now. I am proud to be a member of the "King's Daughters;" and I venture to ask the members of that Union to help the work by selling this book and the photographs, and forming "tens" for that purpose, and for collecting donations, which may be sent to my headquarters.

The appeal which I have made to American women I would also make to all members of my sex, both in England and everywhere; for this leper work is essentially women's work. Such co-operation may be carried out by inducing friends to buy the book, and also the photographs, which were taken and printed in Moscow, and which may be had by writing to my headquarters, 376 Strand, London, W.C.

I cannot bring these remarks to a conclusion without expressing, in the most emphatic manner I know how, my heartfelt sense of obligation to Mr. Henry Johnson, without whose literary aid and experience this record in its present form would have been impossible. He has helped me at every turn of the narrative; and, indeed, the book owes its literary characteristics to his skill. I also desire to give every acknowledgment for the courtesy I have received from all I have come in contact with.

Readers of the following pages must bear in mind that in the whole world there was no one more un-



x

Preface.

worthy, more full of faults and failings, than I, to undertake this leper work. And my earnest hope is that what God has enabled me to do may encourage others, however far down in the scale, or however much they may have turned from God, not merely to "do likewise," but to throw all their strength into greater work than that to which my poor life is dedicated. One rule we must constantly observe—to set our faces heavenwards.

On behalf of all such workers for the furtherance of Christ's kingdom, and for the good of humanity, I venture to repeat the prayer contained in a letter which I received, shortly before setting out to Siberia, from that ideal servant of the sick and suffering, dear to every Englishwoman:—"May the Father Almighty, Omniscient, who is Infinite Love, be your Guide and your Help, is the prayer of, Yours sincerely, FLORENCE NIGHTINGALE



CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

PREPARATIONS.

CHAPTER II.

FIRST EXPERIENCES ON THE ROAD.

The pleasures of sledging along a broken-up road—Wolves—A cheap "hotel"—Frozen lakes—"Survival of the fittest"—Village dwellings—A chivalrous soldier—Ekaterinberg prison—Irbit Fair—A chaotic sledge-ride—"Pirate" drivers—Tjumen hospital—Roses in Siberia—A polluted river, and what the people thought of it—The peasants' love for the Empress—A petition to the Empress—Farewell to English hospitality

18

1



xii

Contents.

CHAPTER III.

MOSTLY MISHAPS.

Minor inconveniences—A specimen of "Young Siberia"—
Russian harness—Shoeing horses—An accident—A smash
—We are shot on to a river—Another accident—Those
horses!—Tobolsk—Safe at Inkalisk—A levée—Visits to
Inkalisk prison—A pitiable sight—Convicts travelling
in winter—A petition to "Her Highness"—Visit to a
"vagabond house"

Page

36

CHAPTER IV.

CLANKING CHAINS.

52

CHAPTER V.

TARANTASS TRAVELLING.

Krasnoyarsk and its institutions—Improvements in the Russian prison system—Character of the true Siberian—Buying a tarantass—How to "mount" a tarantass—Tarantass "rheumatism," its diagnosis and development—Kansk, and its prison—Crossing a ferry, and arrival at Irkutsk

65

CHAPTER VI.

NEARING THE LEPERS.

Committee formed at Irkutsk—My reception at the meeting, and the results of the deliberations—Official documents showing the position of the lepers in the Viluisk Circuit



Contents.	xiii
since 1827—Sixty-four years' pleading—Miseries of the Yakutsk lepers—The leper outcast's doom—Departure for Yakutsk—Journey up the Lena—Chasing the Governor's steamer—Arrival in Yakutsk— Page	73
CHAPTER VII.	
YAKUTSK-THE PROVINCE, AND THE PEOPLE.	
Area, population, &c., of Yakutsk—Native traits and habits—Poverty of the people partly caused by leprosy—Rules of etiquette—Laying up stores for twelve months—Kindness of the Archbishop—Formation of a Local Committee for the lepers—"A chiel amang us takin' notes"—Arrangements for forming the cavalcade to the lepers—My outfit—The start for the 2000 miles' ride on horse-back	
CHAPTER VIII.	
FIRST EXPERIENCES OF THE TWO THOUSAND MILES ON HORSEBACK.	
What the map says—Sinking into bogs—Camping out—Mosquito torments begin—Sleeping in an old graveyard—A singular chorus—Siberian thunderstorm—A dead horse and an eagle—Filthy yourtas—Ravages of mosquitoes—A witch-fable—Earth-combustion—Fallen trees—Some results of our shaking—Bear alarms, and scaring methods—Fool of natives—Frozen corpses—Graves with a tragic history—Keeping my journal—Depression—Arrival at Viluisk	
CHAPTER IX.	

MISERIES OF THE LEPERS.

General appearance of Viluisk—One doctor to 70,000 population—Father John Vinokouroff—Consultation—Looking



xiv

Contents.

for a hospital site—A midnight repast—Site of former hospital—Story of a supposed child-leper—Demoralisation of lepers in filthy yourtas—Setting off to a leper settlement—The mother and her leper-boy in the forest—Marking tracks for the journey—A motley group Page

110

CHAPTER X.

AMONG THE LEPERS.

A treacherous forest-path—Among the lepers at last—The lame, the halt, and the blind—Gifts to the lepers—Indescribable condition of the yourtas—Living with the dead—A healthy girl of eighteen with the lepers—A Russian's noble offer—Perils of the return journey—Alarms from bears and wild horses—A leap from the river—An unpleasant walk through the forest . . .

119

CHAPTER XI.

THROUGH FIRE TO THE LEPERS.

A girl's gratitude—Another journey—A weird spectacle—Choosing a site for the hospital—A priest's petition—Discussing the proposed hospital—Mutilated lepers—Haunted by leper faces—Lepers carried on bare-backed bullocks—A midnight march—Dashing through darkness—Forest solitudes, and screeching owls—An heroic husband—Children in yourtas—The earth on fire—Picking our way through the flames—A mad horse—Pitch-darkness—My little collie guides me—Seventy miles a day—A lone sick woman.

127

CHAPTER XII.

FINISH OF THE TWO THOUSAND MILES' BIDE.

A sagacious dog—Twenty years a leper—Burying lepers— Father John's testimony—Leprosy "sent by the devil"



—Ill again—Another faithful dog—An appeal for a hospital—A night of horrors—Forest perils, and swamp	
troubles—Baptism of a leper's child—Lepers crawling through the snow—The Holy Communion—In extremities—I succumb—My entry into Yakutsk in a cart—Troubles—Taken for a political spy at Yakutsk—Back to Irkutsk	L 40
CHAPTER XIII.	
HOMEWARD BOUND.	
Reception at Irkutsk—Journey to Moscow—Incidents by the way—Opinion of scientific experts—Kindness of the American Ambassador—Meeting of medical men—Offers of help from Sisters of Mercy—My report to the Medical Society of Moscow—Letters of thanks	l.5 6
CHAPTER XIV.	
WHAT IS TO BE DONE?	
The Leper Colony—Medical opinions on the methods proposed —Sympathy in London—My plans for the future—The claims of lepers all over the world—The one sufficient motive—For Christ's sake	172
APPENDIX OF OFFICIAL PAPERS from Governors of Provinces, and other Persons in Authority 1	.97

Contents.

 $\mathbf{x}\mathbf{v}$

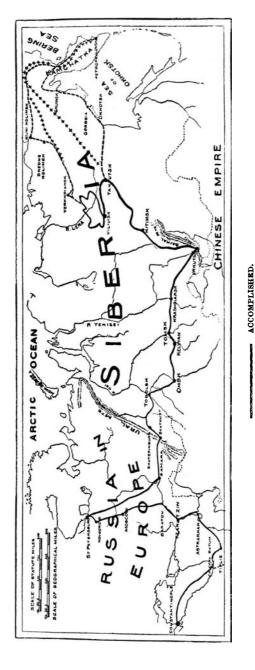


LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

Her Imperial Majesty the Queen				Frontispiece.		
Map of Route				To face page 1		
Kate Marsden in Travelling-dress, w	ith	Мар	\mathbf{of}			
her Route				37	"	15
Her Imperial Majesty the Empress	\mathbf{of}	Russi	ia,			
with Autograph Signature .				,,	"	33
Ordinary Sledge-travelling in Siberia				,,	"	35
Murderers' Implements				,,	,,	59
Breaking up of the River				,,	,,	63
Destitute Leper—taken from Life				,,	21	72
My Home in a Cargo-boat for three w	veek	s on tl	1e			
River Lena				,,	,,	85
Our start from Yakutsk				12	٠,	87
Setting out on our ride of Two Thou	asan	d Mile	es	,,	,,	97
Hut or hovel of Lepers				,,	,,	118
The way in which the Lepers are herd	ed to	gethe	er	77	"	123
Camping out at Midnight in the Fore	est	•		,,	"	127
A Scene from Leper life				"	"	135
Tent-life among the Lepers .				27	"	139
A Dog's Sagacity in Saving Lepers fr	om	Bears		,,	17	140
Leper Woman at entrance of Hut				,,	,,	142
A poor Leper Woman dragging her:	food	acro	SS			
the snow				,,	,,	144
A rough ride across the Marshes				27	,,	147
Pastoral Letter from Bishop Meletie	of Y	akuts	k	,,	,,	153
Meletie, Bishop of Yakutsk and Vilus	isk			"	,,	154
The last stage of the journey in k	oreal	cing-u	р			
season				22	,,	163
The proposed Leper Colony .				,,	,,	175
The Princess Shachovskoy, the Th	ree	Sister	rs		•	
who are already at work amongst						
and Self		•		,,	,,	192
Diploma of the Russian Imperial	\mathbf{Red}	Cros	SS	••	•	
Society						107







---- TO BE ACCOMPLISHED.