

**FRIENDLY
RUSSIA**

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Friendly Russia by Denis Garstin

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DENIS GARSTIN

**FRIENDLY
RUSSIA**

FRIENDLY RUSSIA

BY

DENIS GARSTIN

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
H. G. WELLS

LONDON
T. FISHER UNWIN
ADELPHI TERRACE

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TO
SASHA KROPOTKIN LEBEDEFF,
I GRATEFULLY DEDICATE THIS BOOK;
YET NOT SO MUCH IN GRATITUDE
AS IN FRIENDSHIP.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
INTRODUCTION	9
THE RUSSIANS IN PEACE	
I. THE TWO RUSSIAS	15
II. FIRST IMPRESSIONS	20
III. DATCHA LIFE	30
IV. SERVANTS	42
V. THE ADVENTURE	50
VI. A CELEBRITY'S BIRTHDAY	56
VII. A FRIENDLY PILGRIMAGE	62
VIII. ON FINDING A TARTAR	74
IX. A FAMILY AFFAIR	85
X. THE STRANGER FROM SIBERIA	92
XI. THE WITCH	99
XII. THE ART OF LETTER-WRITING	105

	PAGE
XIII. THE REFUGEES	111
XIV. THE LADY OF THE CABBAGES	117
XV. GILDING THE APPLE AND THE ONION	124
XVI. TOWN LIFE	143
XVII. "IN GOD'S GOOD TIME"	155
XVIII. THE SOCIABLE JOURNEY	163
XIX. THE WIELDER OF STORMS	172
XX. MEMORIES AND A CONTRAST	178

THE RUSSIANS IN WAR

I. THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE	187
II. THE RUSSIAN MIRACLE	209
III. THE ATTACK ON THE EMBASSY	218
IV. A TOUR ENFORCED	226
V. A GLIMMER IN THE SKY	237

INTRODUCTION

Nobody reads Introductions. Only Publishers, following the occult laws of their being, demand them. At its best the Introduction is a gesture of respect to the new from the old, and so let the writer, who has been a pleased and admiring first reader of the book while it was still only in the stage of proofs, testify to the lucidity, humour, and wisdom of Mr. Garstin. He is engaged here upon one of the most necessary and beneficial tasks of our time, the explanation of a people much maligned, the increase of sympathy and understanding across spaces and ignorances that have separated men from men.

For a couple of hundred years Russia has been a fabulous country to the English imagination, a wilderness of wolves, knouts, serfdom, and cruelty. It has been the foil to our dazzling liberties, the darkness to

accentuate our enlightenment. It has also been Bogey, Bogey Russia, which had "designs"—on India, on all the world. Incredible cynicism and wickedness was its mental quality, combined with amazing political devotions. It was not simply a case of ignorance; it was a case of imaginative misrepresentation upon a basis of ignorance. There was a vast literature in which this convenient Russia, all anarchism and secret agents, played its part. And not ten years ago I saw at Folkestone a play of contemporary Russian life in which there were still serfs and knoutings, in which the villain claimed the heroine as his serf and found on her rudely exposed shoulder-blade the neat brand of the estate. Mr. Garstin in his opening chapter distinguishes very neatly between the two Russias—Russia which is ogre-land and the real Russia he saw; I thought we all did; and it is only when one finds such people as Mr. Bernard Shaw, Mr. Ramsay Macdonald, and Mr. Keir Hardie taking this imaginative playground, this penny-dreadful country of hardship and wickedness, in all seriousness as the real Russia, that we begin to realize the need of more explicit statements on the matter. One