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## RUSSIA'S CHASTISEMENT.

Recent dispatches state that a conservative estimate of the number of persons in need of relief in the famished districts of Russia would be 13,000,000; and that diseases superinduced by the scantiness of food and by the wretched substitute called "hunger-bread," composed largely of straw, bran, sweepings, etc., are becoming epidemic in some districts. Notwithstanding this deplorable condition and the laws prohibiting the exportation of grain, thirty-five millions more pounds of rye have been exported than last year – the attraction being the higher prices offered elsewhere. To add to the trouble, an unusually severe winter is threatened.

The New York *Times* published, Oct. 25th, the following dark outlook, written by its London correspondent. We hope, nay, we believe, that this picture is far too dark – that the facts fall far short of the suggestion. It nevertheless gives an idea of what is possible. When the great trouble does come, we believe it will generally be introduced by famine. This at least points out possibilities not only for Russia but for the world. Starvation will awaken and energize people whom nothing else would arouse. The article runs as follows:

"Winter began in Russia on Thursday with the first sharp frost. Living men cannot remember [R1335 : page 153] any other year in which this simple announcement meant what it does now. There are literally millions of human beings, at the farthest within a six-days' journey of London, to whom this frost comes as a sentence of death by starvation. Although the censors have forbidden the Russian papers to discuss the famine, the *Novosti* ventures the declaration that 20,000,000 creatures are already without food, and that a sum

four times greater than the recent loan extracted from France is needed to keep them alive.

"Needless to say, no such sum is forthcoming. Indeed, in the matter of intelligent relief, nothing is forthcoming. Vague figures are given of money raised for the sufferers, quite often by eccentric emotional devices of self-denial, which show the warm-hearted childishness of the Slav, but nobody is able to tell how this money has been applied. The only intelligence which reaches us from the doomed districts is of the famine prices put everywhere upon food by the Russian merchants, and of Russian usurers and small traders who are going about trading on the misery of the peasants, buying hair from the heads of poor girls for a few shillings and stripping houses of every portable article, old icons and picturesque costumes handed down from mother to daughter, and the like, for next to nothing.

### **RIOTS AGAINST THE JEWS.**

"In two or three cases the ferment of disorder which is seething under this terrible surface has broken out in riots directed against the Jews. Doubtless there will be more than melancholy aggravations of Israel's miseries during the winter in localities where a few bad Jews, or the even rarer rich Jews, have given the race an evil repute. But I risk nothing in predicting that if real and widespread violence results from the present famine; its force will be almost wholly directed against the native Russian officials, landlords, traders and village usurers, or *Kulaks*, to whom the peasants, as a rule, understand very well that they owe their sufferings.

"Russian exiles here in London are greatly excited by the news they have been getting in the recent few weeks from subterranean sources inside the empire and from their associates in Switzerland and other Continental places of refuge. They decline to divulge this information, and the few things which have been told to me may

not be printed, but it can at least be said that they expect little less than civil war spreading over vast tracts and whole regions of their native land. They say frankly that we outsiders exaggerate the good nature of the *Moujik*, or, rather, that side by side with that amiability in his nature exist possibilities of awful brute-like ferocity when the utmost limit of patience under provocation is exhausted. They think this has been reached, and they say the condition of seven-eighths of rural Russia is now infinitely worse than that of rustic France on the eve of the revolution. They look to see a Muscovite reign of terror begun this winter which will well-nigh efface from human memory the excesses and horrors begun by the fall of the Bastille. There are not lacking signs that this may be ushered in by striking personal events."

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