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**With Russian pilgrims**

**Boddy, Alexander A.**

**London, [1892]**

**Universitätsbibliothek Bern**

Shelf Mark: SOB RoEu 254

Persistent Link: <https://doi.org/10.3931/e-rara-90698>

Chapter IV. Solombóla and Archangel.

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## CHAPTER IV.

### SOLOMBÓLA AND ARCHANGEL.

The s.s. *Highlands* at Rusánov's—M. Géllerman, a very hospitable Russian—A town on English soil—Nóvyé Cholmogóry—Prince Golítsin—Open prescription—The Politsméister—A fire alarm—Despatch of post—An angel's day—Skins and sacred pictures—An ambassador's departure.

OUR good ship came alongside the wooden quay at Rusánov's sawmills, and seemed but little the worse for her struggles in the Arctic. The inevitable droshki was at hand, but a private one, whose kútker had orders to drive me to the house of a worthy Russian gentleman of German descent—known to his servants as Andréi Andréitch, and to the mercantile world as Gospodin Géllerman. He was then the acting consul for Great Britain. They were daily expecting the arrival of the regular consul, Mr. Bartlett Cobb, B.A. Under Mr. Géllerman's most hospitable roof I sojourned: he would, he said, have been hurt if I had not done so.

The town of Solombóla is built on English soil. For nearly three centuries our vessels have cast out their ballast here on the banks of the Dviná river, until

there has grown up a small section of Great Britain under the sway of the Tsar. Solombóla is to Archangel what Monkwearmouth is to Sunderland, or Gateshead to Newcastle—an important section, yet quite a distinct and separate town rather than a suburb.

I arrived in the Archangel Government about the same time as the murderous Muscovite mosquitoes. I shall have other opportunities of referring in detail to these bloodthirsty agitators.

The full designation originally of Archangel was "The Fortress-Town of St. Michael the Archangel," and to the present day the fort exists with the cathedral church of St. Michael within its earthworks. The town was called New Holmogory (Nóvyé Cholmogóry) by Ivan the Terrible. It is some thirty-six miles from the White Sea, and lies near the junction of most of the delta arms of the mighty river Dviná (navigable for 1128 versts farther by flat-bottomed river steamers). With the exception of the churches and public buildings, it is built entirely of wood, and contains some 80,000 inhabitants, if you include Solombóla. In appearance Archangel resembles other Russian towns, being sprinkled with white churches and great cupolas, for one Russian provincial town is very much like another from the Black Sea to the White, so that Taganróg on the Sea of Azóv seems very little different to Archangel on the great northern Dviná.

Putting on my dress suit and cylinder hat, I drove with a Russian major to call on Prince Golítsin, the governor of the huge Government of Archangel—as

large as England and France together. Our *izvósshik* pulled up at a white plaster-covered brick government building, built in the Petersburg style, and we solemnly passed between the soldiers on guard with glittering bayonets, and in at the great door. Footmen took our wraps and passed us on to the Secretary's sanctum, and after my card had been sent in, we were ushered into the Prince's private room. Three *svyatýe obrazá* (sacred pictures) one above the other, hung in the corner, with a hanging ruby glass lamp before and festoons of drapery around. A business-like nest of drawers and desk were covered with the Prince's writing materials, and on the carpet lay an enormous Polar bear's skin with fierce head and snarling jaws and teeth, ready to bite my boots.

Knyaz' Nikolái Dimítrievitch Golítsin came in and shook hands affably. He seems to mix with all the people in the town, and not to stand on his dignity to any great extent. He had been in England, and could speak English fairly well. I explained to him that I was travelling for the sake of gaining general information and health, and should be greatly obliged for any assistance that he could give me. He promised very courteously to write me a letter addressed to all his officials, to request them to render me all assistance whilst in his Government. The *podorójnaya* is no longer given in Russia as formerly, and the Prince instead substituted a less formal letter.

We chatted for some time, the Prince very kindly taking a deep interest in my travels, past and future.

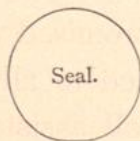
Subsequently there was handed to me the following formidable document :—

*Ministry of Internal Affairs.  
Archangel Government Office,  
Archángelsk.*

*Open Prescription.*

*HEREWITH it is prescribed to the Police District and Village Authorities of the Government of Archangel, to show all possible assistance to the English pastor, Alexándr Alfrédovitch Boddy, travelling through the Archangel Government on scientific subjects, by providing him legal means to arrive at the subjects required, and also to show assistance for the receipt without hindrance for M. Boddy on the Post District and Private Stations of Horses, and where it shall be needed, also Boats for legal rates.*

(Signed) GOVERNOR PRINCE GOLITSIN.



As we left the audience-chamber, the head of the police department, M. Yúrii Nicoláevitch Achvérdov, was awaiting us. A pleasant, fiercely-mustachioed and

whiskered little man, tremendous in his uniform and power. He bowed pleasantly, and said that he had received orders to place himself at my disposal, and he would like to know what he might do for me. I said I should like to see the prisons, and also the system for the prevention and extinction of fire in so large a wooden town.

"The prisons you shall see any time, and an unexpected fire-alarm shall be given now."

We jumped into a droshki, and went at a break-neck speed towards the nearest fire-tower. There are four fire-stations, including one at Solombóla for the shipping.

"Flag, flag!" he cried, and waved his arm to the fireman in charge at the summit of the high fire-tower, who had noticed the galloping horses of the droshki. Instantly a great red flag ran up the mast, and the man pulled some levers communicating with the fire-station below.

"Let us stand in the centre of the square, and then will you be so good as to note the time with your watch? In three minutes the entire set of horses, carriages, and firemen will come out from yonder door, and in ten minutes will arrive from stations two versts away two other complete equipments signalled for by the fire-flag."

It began to get exciting. We could hear the shouting of men and neighing of horses, and then the great doors were flung open, and out galloped firemen in helmets on little Russian horses, and in waggons with ladders,

great barrels, and hand engines, evidently meaning business. They came on at full gallop, wheeled round the square, and then stood in line, the horses trembling and the men all excited. Raising right hands to their shápkas, they all saluted, "Good day, your Honour." They were "on time."

"Now look down that long wide street, and tell me what you can see."

"I can see a cloud of dust and people running excitedly, and now I see something bright—it must be the sun shining on the helmets."

On came this cavalcade, and at every house the windows were peopled, and the cry was, "Where is the fire?" The mayor and corporation of Archangel came hurriedly out of their offices to assure themselves of the safety of the town.

The cavalcade, a counterpart of the first, dashed into the square with all its vehicles and horsemen, and pulled up in splendid order alongside the other.

At the very moment the second company was turning the corner, then from the other direction came brigade number three, equally excited, and soon all the men and horses were massed in the square saluting the Police Master. All were "on time." Then they brought out a steam fire-engine (we have not such a thing in our town of 150,000 inhabitants, viz., Sunderland), and threw water on the Town Hall.

Lastly, the firemen were sent up the fire-tower, and they threw down one end of a very lengthy sack some sixty feet long, and making it fast at the top, com-

menced to slide down inside it, one after another ; and they were pulled out at the bottom by their long boots, as the men held the lower end outwards to ease their descent. Hot and breathless, and with hair unkempt, these obedient Russian firemen went on until I asked in pity for them to be stopped.

All Archangel was roused by this time, and I became a very important person for a few moments ; for had I not given the city a shock, a fire alarm ?

“Who is he ?” they asked one another.

“Ah ! he is the new consul-general for Great Britain,” they replied.

“Ah ! what an honour do we pay to the queen of that country !”

Archangel has been burnt down twice or thrice.

Whilst at Archangel I received a postcard from England the day *before* it was posted. “May 20th” was stamped on it in England, and it arrived in Archangel May 19th, and bore that date also stamped upon it. The explanation of course is that the Russians keep the old style, twelve days behind the rest of Europe and the world, and often write the date thus :  $\frac{\text{May } 19}{\text{May } 31}$ .

The making up of the mails in the post-office is a tremendous business. They have all to be packed in enormously strong huge leathern pouches and sealed, and then they are dragged in waggons (telegas) for hundreds of miles through the fir-forests at full gallop—horses being changed from time to time. They take a week to reach St. Petersburg when the roads are fair.

I dined on His Imperial Majesty's vessel the

*Polar Star* one day by the courtesy of the officers. Doffing my cap to the imperial ensign, I saluted the sentry, and was welcomed by a polite lieutenant, who took us round the ship, and then into the mess-room.

Great jokes went on all dinner-time. It was one officer's "Angel's-day," and he had a special birthday-cake, as we should call it. Every Russian is christened by the name of some patron saint, and the day on which that saint is commemorated, and not his birthday, is his angel's-day or name's-day; the same name at the same time becomes the name of the Guardian Angel whom he believes to be assigned to him at baptism.

We were a merry party that day on the *Polyárnyaya Zvezdá*, though they were distressed when I would not join them at champagne. They scarcely understood what is meant by a teetotaller. "Ah, one of the Molokány, perhaps."

I invested in some skins whilst at Archangel, and the bill may be of interest. (A rouble is about 2s.)

#### THE FUR-DEALER'S BILL.

	Roubles.	Kopecks.
1 White bear's skin . . . . .	50	...
2 Covers made of bearskin . . . . .	65	...
1 Cover made of a wolfskin . . . . .	20	...
1 Musk-rat's tail . . . . .	...	30
	<hr/>	<hr/>
The sum . . . . .	135	30

The amount received with thankfulness,

T. R. LANDSMANN.

ARCHANGELSK, 20/5.

In the Gostínnyi Dvor (the market) I purchased some Sviatýe Obrazá (holy pictures or icons), such as the poor people have in their log-houses. They can be obtained on wood or on paper. One favourite subject is the copy of the Kazan icon of the Mother and Child. Tiny angels are holding a crown upon the Virgin's head; the Divine Child is in the act of blessing, with right hand upraised, and around both their heads is a very material and substantial representation of rays of glory. There were also expensive massive icons with protecting covers (*rizy*) of metal, just leaving exposed the face and hands of the figure. St. Nicholas is a favourite saint—the patron of sailors and children (Santa Claus) and Russians generally. A Russian usually prays before his icon; and it must not be in modern style, but strictly Slavonic, quaint, and conventional. Here and there in the streets, or at the entrance to some public building, is a great icon with the sacred red lamp burning in front, and some devout *krestyánin* abstractedly praying before it with cap doffed and fingers making oftentimes the “sign of man's redemption” on his breast.

There was much ado in early days when our ambassadors arrived or departed from Nówye Cholmogóry, as this town was first called by Ivan Vasílievitch (John the Terrible) when built as a more convenient place for the customs than Cholmogóry higher up the Dviná. Horsey the ambassador writes: “The Duke mett me at the castell gate” (Archangel fortress) “with three hundred gonners shott of their calivers and all the ordinance he had in the castell for honnor of my

waelcom, all the Dutch and French ships" (even in 1587 several had followed Sauvage, the first Frenchman who, the year before, had arrived at the Dviná) "in that roade shott of also their ordinance by the Duk's apointment before I came. He feasted me, the next daie brought me to my barge, had apointed fifty men to rowe and hundred gonners in small boats to garde me to Rose Iland, did me all the honnor he could in his golden coate, told me he was commanded by the King's letter so to doe, toke leave and preied me to signifie his service to Boris Fedorovitsch. Came within four hours to Rose Iland, being but thirty miells, wher all the English masters, agent, and merchants mett me. The gonners landed before me, stode in rancke, and shott of all their calivers, which the ships heeringe shott of also some of their ordinance. The gonners and bargmen made drinccke at the seller dore, and despatched that night back again to the castell. The next day friers of St. Nicholas brought me a present, fraesh salmons, rye loaves, cupps and painted plaeters. The third daye after my arivall" (on Rose Island) "ther was sent a gentlemann, Sabloch Savera, a captain, from the Duke; delivered me a copy of his comission of the Emperor's and Boris Fedorovitsch, their grace and goodness towards me, presented for my provicion 70 ewe shepe, 20 (16) live oxen and bullocks, 600 henns, 40 (25) flaesches of bakon, 2 milch keyne, 2 goats, 10 fresh sallmons, 10 geese, 2 swans, 2 cranes, 3 young beares, a wild boare, 40 gallons of aquavita, 100 (65) gallons of mead, 200 (60) gallons of beer,

1,000 (600) loaves of white bread, 60 (80) bushells of meall, and 2,000 eggs, garlick and onyons store. There was four great lighters and many watermen, etc., there, that came with this provicion, which wear all orderly dismiss. I took some time to make merrie with the master and merchants, havinge some pastymes that followed me, plaiers, danzinge bares and pieps, and dromes and trompetts, feasted them, and divided my provicion in liberal proportion."

Horsey embarked with his companions at Rose Island on the 26th of August, and on the 30th of September landed at Tynemouth, whence he travelled post by the York road to London, reaching it in four days.