

# HOLIDAY WITH A RUSSIAN FAMILY

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spent in the family was the day Irina was twenty-three. She had a lovely birthday party and twelve special friends came tramping up the winding stairs, each in best clothes, and each bearing a bouquet of flowers. There was the most tremendous buffet handsomely set out on the big table, for Russians don't consider a party a success unless their guests eat far too much.

Let me tell you what we had: there was caviare (which isn't a luxury in the land of the sturgeon), black caviare, and red caviare, lots of different cold meats and sausages, smoked salmon, and various other smoked fishes, great bowls of green salads, cucumbers in sweet pickle, cranberry jellies, mountains of sugary confectionery of the sort Mrs. Beaton set such emphasis upon in her earlier editions, candies of all kinds, and to drink there was red wine from the Caucasus and a very nice light lager beer brewed locally. This party was a success. After everything was eaten, Sasha brought out his guitar and Boris his accordion, and everyone began to sing, together and separately, and then went on singing for hours. Each person had to sing something, so I sang them one of our English songs, "Black-eyed Susan." They liked this so much that they at once adopted it into their own repertoire. "Chornushka Sussannah" they called it, and I have no doubt it is still being sung to this day, modified by being passed on and altered and added to as it circulates.

## They All Worked

What fun we used to have in that flat. Every meal time turned itself into a party. Everyone talked and laughed and told his day's adventures when we met for the big meal of the day, at about four-thirty, work usually finishing at four.

## IN YOUR CUPS

**TEA-CUP READING.** Simple Guide Series. No. 7. Whitecombe and Tombs. 1/6.

ALMOST any intelligent person, we are here informed, can learn to read the meanings of the various symbols in the cup. But as the Simple Guide contains sixty-one pages of symbols and their meanings in alphabetical order it looks rather as if the intelligent person needs as well a considerable amount of application and a fund of spare time. Our only complaint about the book is that its list of symbols is so escapist. Though signs of the Zodiac are dealt with at length there is no mention of swastika, rising sun and hostile periscope, or that seeing an aeroplane means a sudden journey and a rise in life. We would be quite prepared to believe the sudden journey part.

They all worked—Irina worked in a rope factory nearby, dropping Leonka at the local nursing school on her way to work—and earned good wages, and were constantly buying oddments for themselves and their flat. Grandma kept the flat scrupulously clean, and took a great pride in her starched white linen covers. It reminded me of home sometimes.

They ate the mid-day meal in their factory canteen. After work and our big meal, we all went out together (Russians love being in a group), skating at the local rink at the corner of the boulevard, which had fairy-lights and a good brass band, or dancing at the Park of Rest and Culture. Often we went to the cinema, or better still to the theatre of ballet. Once Sasha took us to the Red Army's own special theatre where his fellow aviators put on a charmingly produced operetta. But Sasha was studying French and trigonometry and all sorts of difficult subjects for his examinations, so often just Misha and Boris and Irina and I went out. They took me to all the art galleries and the museums too, as I am an artist

by trade, and they were interested in pictures, too, like all Russians.

Rest days were apt to be an exhausting business for me, because the whole family, except grandma, was mad about sport. Sport, as we know it, is comparatively new in Russia, but young and old of both sexes have taken to it with enthusiasm. The Russians now play football very well; only in summer, however, as the bitter climate and deep snow make it impossible during the winter months. They also play netball, volleyball and tennis. The Red Army now plays polo; I believe it was the American Ambassador who suggested it to Marshal Voroshilov some years ago, and the idea

was taken up with great success. There are lots of gymnasia where instructors will help you to qualify for a badge in swimming, running, jumping, and sharp-shooting with a rifle. In summer time you can swim, climb mountains, go boating and yachting on the wide rivers and round the coast. In the winter you can skate, ski, or play ice-hockey. One of the most popular sports in Russia is parachute-jumping. This was really meant as a first exercise in learning to fly, but it has developed into quite a separate branch of aeronautics, and when I was last in Russia the newspapers were full of thrilling stories of delayed parachute descents and jumps from almost incredible heights (in oxygen masks). The girls came out every bit as creditably as the boys in these feats of endurance and skill.



## ADVICE ABOUT ELASTIC NET FOUNDATIONS



This is what we mean. At the line of seaming where the elastic net joins the cloth panels, the elastic thread may sometimes appear to be pulling away. But it amounts to nothing more than a single strand of elastic net being cut by a machine needle and, owing to the fineness of the net, this cannot be completely obviated. However, no harm is done to the garment, as it will not fray further and will not run. So it is best ignored.

With elastic net foundation garments, it sometimes happens that a thread may appear to be pulling away from the seam, where the lastex net is joined to the cloth panels. Here, where elastic nets are comparatively new, this may prejudice a woman against the garment—especially as the extreme lightness makes it appear somewhat frail. But in England and America, where women are more familiar with elastic nets, such a "flaw" is ignored, because it is widely recognized as unavoidable in the stitching of these foundations that the machine needle may sometimes pierce a lastex thread. It is considered of no account, and does not make the foundation any the less desirable, since, with this type of weave, the thread cannot run or loosen the tension or in any way impair the efficiency of the garment.

Manufacturers could remedy matters themselves, with an extra stitch, but they do not, and in fact warn purchasers not to either, because it would be difficult to avoid piercing other threads in doing so.

To-day, elastic net foundations are something to be cherished as you would cherish a pair of sheer silk stockings, for they are about to become almost as rare. The fabric comes from America, and fresh supplies will not be easy to come by now.

"Corset Review," by courtesy of Barlei

## Instead Of Oranges

### Tomato Juice For Babies

MOTHERS of babies will be interested in the following extract from an article by Dr. Muriel Bell, Nutritionist to the Department of Health:

"The shortage of oranges will occasion some worry on the part of mothers of small babies, for orange juice is such a well tolerated and reliable source of Vitamin C for babies. To mothers and to expectant mothers the advice that follows is principally directed.

"In using tomato juice as a substitute for orange juice you should regard it as equal to about half the strength of orange juice. Giving twice as much tomato juice as orange juice to babies may possibly prove upsetting to some babies. In order to minimise this see that the tomatoes used are ripe and firm, not over-ripe. Then also, start baby with small doses—a teaspoonful to begin with—and gradually work up to the larger quantity, as you do with orange juice. Furthermore, those babies who are unable to take raw tomato juice will be more likely to be able to take it cooked; this is a rule for all foods to which certain individuals are sensitive.

"When cooking it, use an unchipped enamel or an aluminium saucepan, and do not cook it for too long. Fortunately the Vitamin C of tomatoes is not readily destroyed by cooking, though it is more likely to be destroyed if it comes in contact with copper-containing vessels. For babies, the seeds will need to be removed before giving the juice or puree to the baby."