

## The Eastern Orthodox Church in America

By V. Gribayédoff

Within the past few weeks there has been celebrated throughout Russian religious circles the one hundredth anniversary of the establishment of the Russian-Greek Church in the Western Hemisphere, and, as this



Bishop Nicolai

event is coincident with the trip to the eastern seaboard of the Russian Bishop of Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, as well as with the opening of a new Russian church at Streator, Ill., a few words may be in order regarding the present status of this denomination in the United States.

The headquarters of the Russian Church in America are at San Francisco, and Bishop Nicolai exercises spiritual jurisdiction, not alone over the orthodox inhabiting the north-western end of the continent, but over those in every other section thereof. The number of these is not definitely known. Thirty years ago, according to Roman statistics, fully ten thousand inhabitants of North America acknowledged the Czar of Russia as the head of their Church. Similar authorities estimate the number to be far greater at the present day, owing in part to immigration and in part to the conversion of many members of the dissenting sect of Uniates inhabiting Pennsylvania, Ohio, New York, Illinois, Minnesota, and Colorado.

Bishop Nicolai's efforts are responsible to some extent for this change, and have earned for him the gratitude of his countrymen. He appears to belong to that progressive section of the Russian hierarchy—unfortunately, too small in numbers as yet to combat the more conservative elements—who believe in an eventual unification of the various denominations comprising Christendom, and who, twenty years ago, expressed open sympathy for Dr. Dollinger in his fight against the dogma of Papal infallibility, and even appeared at Old Catholic conventions to advocate their theories.

Working on these lines, Nicolai has striven assiduously to gather within the fold of the Mother Church the many scattering elements from eastern Europe now settled in this country—Poles, Bulgarians, Servians, Uniates, and others—not for the sole reason, perhaps, that he considers them better off under the spiritual guidance of the orthodox Church, but also because of the danger of their eventually drifting to Rome—a most undesirable alternative, from his point of view. The beautiful little church recently dedicated by him at Streator, Ill., amid a large coal-mining population, is thus attended by a most mixed congregation, many of whom have never lived within the confines of the Czar's empire and are ignorant of the Russian language, but all more or less able to comprehend the beautiful ritual in the ancient tongue from which have sprung the various Slavonic languages. The establishment of the Streator church will, it is understood, be followed by similar undertakings in different large cities of the United States; notably in New York, which has a Greek church for the benefit of its Hellenic colony, but none for the subjects of the Czar.

The centennial celebration referred to at the beginning of this article relates to the

arrival on the island of Kaldyan, one of the Aleutian group, in the autumn of 1794, of nine Russian monks under the leadership of the abbot Joseph Bolotoff, and the erection there of the first orthodox church and school in the Western Hemisphere. This institution, which was dedicated to St. Paul, is still in existence, and forms the nucleus of a thriving colony of Russians and Indian half-breeds.

The discovery, settlement, and Christianization of these islands was the result, not of government enterprise, but of that of two private individuals, Skelikhoff and Baranoff by name, who, in 1783, at their own risk and expense, without any official authority whatever, fitted out three vessels on the Kamchatka coast, and undertook the conquest and subjugation of the majority of islands of the Aleutian and Kurilian groups. This task was practically completed in 1788, when Skelikhoff, on arriving in St. Petersburg, obtained imperial sanction from Catharine II. for the formation of a company to administer the islands and explore their resources. And it was on the same occasion and by the bold adventurer's suggestion that an orthodox mission wended its way toward the New Hemisphere.

## A Blind Man at a Football Game

The New York "Sun" gives the following interesting picture from life:

An interested and interesting visitor from Washington sat on the side lines at the Polo Grounds on November 30, and took in the football game between the deaf-mute teams of this city and Washington. He was a youth about nineteen years old, with an intelligent face, and during the play he kept close to another Washingtonian of about his own age, through whose communications he kept track of the game. He was not only deaf and dumb, but blind as well, and he followed the game by reading by touch the messages, which his companion spelled out manually for him.

Notwithstanding this second-hand arrangement, the youth was just as much excited as anybody else. During the first few moments of the game his face was a picture of anxiety, as the visiting team couldn't do much with their opponents at the start. Presently, however, they carried the ball over the line. The blind deaf-mute's companion grabbed his hand and jammed it to the ground, at the same time patting him on the back. To all the spectators it was quite evident that this meant:

"We have made a touch-down."

Up rose the blind youth and swung his arms in the air, capering with glee. Presently one of his flying hands struck his companion a big across the neck which fairly lifted him on his feet. Then the excited partisan felt off until he reached the other and rubbed about his head softly in evidence of regret and sympathy. A little later there was a dispute in the middle of the field, and the informant had told his friend that the umpire had decided against their team, for the blind man had dumped and shook his fists aloft in an excited manner.

During the second half of the game the New Yorkers outplayed their rivals, to the great grief of the sightless visitor, who curled in a ball and wore the most melancholy of up-tenances. At the finish, however, the score stood 20 to 6 in favor of Washington. When this was communicated to the blind youth he arose and cast his hat into the air. In his confusion which followed the call of the game he had great trouble in finding some one to pick it up for him again.

Notwithstanding his blindness, he attends the athletic contests in which the Washington institution takes part, and even goes to the theater occasionally. Of course an interpreter is always with him.

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A. CONAN DOYLE contributes a strong poem entitled "A Forgotten Tale."

NOAH BROOKS writes of the men who were concerned in forming American parties.

GILBERT PARKER tells a dramatic story of a Labrador woodsman and his wife.

EDITH WHARTON writes of an artistic discovery she made in an almost unknown Italian village.

GEORGE TRUMBULL LADD gives a timely article on the mental characteristics of the Japanese.

AUGUSTINE BIRRELL publishes one of his short essays on "Good Taste."

THOMAS DWIGHT, M.D., gives many anecdotes of Dr. O. W. Holmes when a physician and professor.

CHARLES D. J. writes a striking story, "The Deer-Licks."

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