



Letters from Russia (New York Review Books Classics)

Astolphe De Custine

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The Marquis de Custine's record of his trip to Russia in 1839 is a brilliantly perceptive, even prophetic, account of one of the world's most fascinating and troubled countries. It is also a wonderful piece of travel writing. Custine, who met with people in all walks of life, including the Czar himself, offers vivid descriptions of St. Petersburg and Moscow, of life at court and on the street, and of the impoverished Russian countryside. But together with a wealth of sharply delineated incident and detail, Custine's great work also presents an indelible picture—roundly denounced by both Czarist and Communist regimes—of a country crushed by despotism and “intoxicated with slavery.”

Letters from Russia, here published in a new edition prepared by Anka Muhlstein, the author of the Goncourt Prize-winning biography of Custine, stands with Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* as a profound and passionate encounter with historical forces that are still very much at work in the world today.

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