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PAST AND PRESENT

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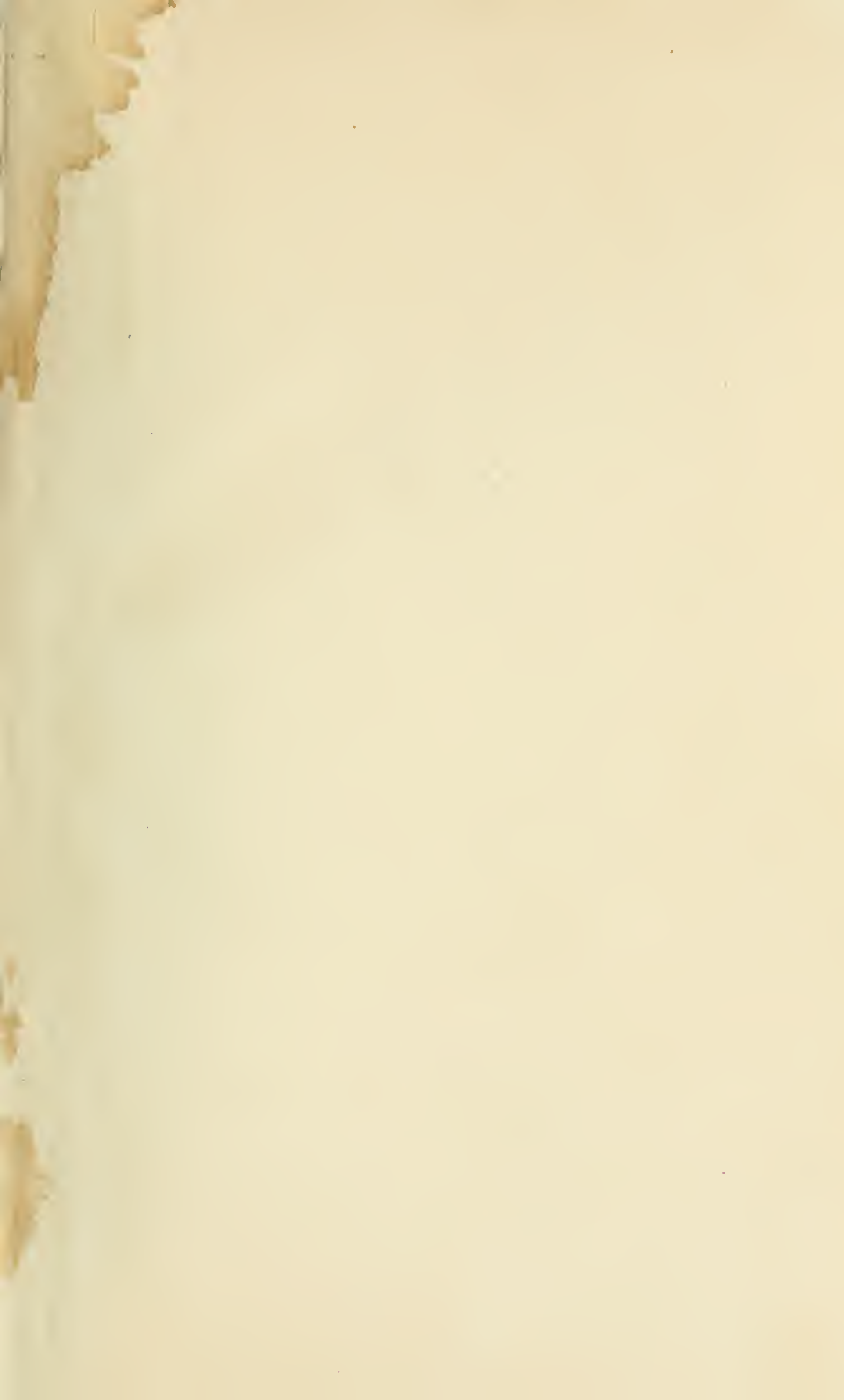

PETROGRAD
PAST AND PRESENT

BY
WILLIAM BARNES STEVENI

WITH THIRTY ILLUSTRATIONS

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PETROGRAD PAST AND PRESENT

The Church of the Resurrection of Christ. Built on the spot where Alexander II, the "Tsar Emancipator," was assassinated

DK
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I

THE ARRIVAL IN PETROGRAD AND THE NECESSITY FOR PASSPORTS

It was a lovely morning in May when our diminutive steamer the *Viking* first entered the swift stream of the Neva, by which river the confined and pent-up waters of Lake Ladoga find their way to the Gulf of Finland. As our little boat—which had once done service as a canal boat in England—entered the river, I was charmed by the beautiful spectacle of Peter's City, now Petrograd. On the right, past the massive Nicholas Bridge, named in honour of St Nicholas, one of Russia's patron saints, stood the beautiful Cathedral of St Isaac, with its five cupolas of gilded copper shining in the morning sky like balls of molten gold against a background of azure. On the left, fronting the granite quays, were a number of splendid buildings, beginning with the palace of the Grand Duke Paul and ending with that classic structure, the Holy Synod, for many years the scene of Pobjedonodzeff's fanatical activity. On the opposite side of the river was the Vasilii Ostoff (Basil Island), with its miles of shipping and its stately front of offices and palatial buildings, many of which were inhabited by the merchant princes of the capital. Past the Nicholas Bridge was that stately block, the Academy of Arts, which owed its origin to Catherine the Great.

After a stormy passage in our little canal boat, now bravely doing service as a sea-going vessel, I was delighted to arrive at my destination in safety, and still more so to watch the scene before me—the great and wondrous creation of Peter awaking to life and

activity, and the scene of my future joys, sorrows and labours for a quarter of a century. Suddenly I was awakened from my day-dreams by a gruff, hearty voice asking for my passport. "Passport!" I exclaimed in astonishment. "What do I want with a passport? Surely such a thing was never heard of since the days of the great Napoleon and the Continental system!" for even at that early age I was a "demon for history," as my literary friends called me. The captain was thunderstruck at my ignorance and my reply; I had but the haziest conception of Russia. "Napoleon be hanged," he replied. "I know nothing about the Continental system, but I know this, that unless you can produce a passport at once you will be arrested and the ship will be fined." As he spoke he pointed to a boat with two gendarme officers on board and also several *dosmoschiks* (searchers) rowing swiftly towards us. There was not a moment to lose, and the captain, evidently a man of resource, immediately rigged me out in a suit of oilskins and entered my name on the manifest as "cabin-boy." I was then told to go and range myself in line with others on the after-deck while the gendarmes keenly inspected each one of us and compared us with the names on the manifest. When it came to my turn they looked very suspiciously at the pale, girlish face and white hands of the little cabin-boy, whom they evidently suspected of sailing under false colours. After exchanging a few words with the captain and signing various documents in the cabin, the gendarmes and customs officers withdrew, leaving a wretched dosmoschik on board to watch the vessel. I could not help but think that he had been left behind to watch the author of this work, and therefore I confided my suspicions to that dear old sea-dog, the captain, who again came to my rescue. He invited the eager, brown-eyed dosmoschik into the cabin to have a drink of Swedish punch,

a brew which has a peculiar power of robbing a man of the use of his legs before he is aware of it. After the unsuspecting searcher had taken three glasses of this golden liquid we were joined by the mate, who invited our amiable guest to partake of kümmel and other liqueurs. Presently both the captain and mate were called on deck to their duties, whilst I, the pale, innocent-looking cabin-boy, was left to do the honours as host. I listened while the dosmoschik's broken English grew more and more incoherent, until finally he dozed peacefully in the corner of the cabin, oblivious to the ship, the foreigners, the pale-faced youth and everything around him.

In this condition I left the man, probably dreaming of the lonely steppes and villages of Little Russia (for he was evidently a South Russian, judging from his appearance). The captain in the meantime had not been idle. Without losing any time he got out the long-boat, and after placing my box under the seat, beneath the folds of a large flag, ordered his men to row up the river and land me. This order was carried out, and in twenty minutes or so I found myself somewhere near the Baltic works, far away from the prying eyes of the customs officers. The mate, who accompanied us, chartered a *droshky* for me to the Cronstadt pier on the Vasilii Ostroff. Here I took a ticket by the Cronstadt steamer—an old English river boat dating from the days of Queen Victoria—and in one and a half hours I arrived in Cronstadt and was safe with my friends, who had long expected me. But I was not to be at rest for long, for as soon as my friends knew that I had no passport their anxiety on my account deprived me of all the pleasure I was experiencing in my new surroundings. It would never have done to tell the authorities how I had smuggled myself into "Holy Russia," so, after keeping me indoors nearly a fortnight, they decided to take the risk of getting

a passport from a friend in England. This was duly signed, and in this irregular way, at sixteen years of age, I entered Russia—the country where I was to have so many interesting experiences and adventures during my twenty-seven years' sojourn.

As for the erring dosmochik, I frequently used to meet him in the large square near the Customs House, but on seeing me he would drop his beady, brown eyes, for, like myself, he was suffering from the pangs of a guilty conscience—or perhaps from the effects of that never-to-be-forgotten spree on the little *Viking*, when he was so gloriously fuddled on punch, kümmel, vodka and port wine—an experience not easily forgotten in his otherwise dull, uneventful existence. These poor men have to endure a laborious life on a paltry wage, which hardly serves to keep body and soul together. All this happened nearly forty years ago, in those unregenerate days when the almighty rouble ruled Russia and vodka-drinking had not been abolished by an Imperial ukase.

As for the old captain who saved me from the dilemma, he has long since gone to his viking forbears, whilst his little boat lies at the bottom of the Gulf of Finland, beneath sixty fathoms of cold, blue water. About a couple of voyages after my arrival the *Viking* foundered, with all on board except the captain. A terrible sea suddenly struck her, breaking open her hatches and putting out her fires. Being laden with Swedish iron and copper, she sank like a stone, with all hands on board, including the kind old stewardess who "mothered" me.

Before proceeding further with my narrative I must not forget to say that I was unusually lucky in not getting into serious trouble for not having a passport. Not every one is so fortunate, as the following incident will show. Shortly after my arrival an invalid clergyman, who had come out to Cronstadt for the good of his

health, narrowly escaped imprisonment, for the gendarmes in Petrograd, hearing that he was on board an English steamer without that most necessary document, the passport, boarded the boat and arrested him. He was not even given time to go down to the cabin and get an overcoat, but was hurried into a boat and taken to the capital, with dire visions of the fortress of St Peter and St Paul as his only companions. Had this unfortunate curate known more about Russia he would have escaped arrest, but his very ignorance and innocence were his undoing, for on being asked by the gendarmes what he was, he replied: "A student." "*Skoobent,*" ejaculated the gendarmes; "then away with him to the police station." In those days to be a student was synonymous with being a revolutionary. Almost every student was openly or secretly an antagonist to the Government. After the "conspirator" had been landed at the police station the English Vice-Consul was sent for, and it then transpired that the pale young gentleman in the black coat and white collar was "a student of theology"!—to the great disgust of his captors, who imagined that they had caught a dangerous person hiding on the steamboat prior to making his escape to the shores of perfidious Albion.[1] Directly the mistake was cleared up the unhappy curate was liberated, with apologies. I have known many similar incidents—all arising from the negligence of Englishmen in not taking the few necessary precautions, either of procuring a passport or of having it properly viséd before their departure for Russia.

On reaching the Gutaieffsky docks, which are a

[1] It was a common practice in those days for fugitive students and other "politicals" to escape in English and German steamers from Russia. The good-natured captains, who sympathised with the revolutionists, would frequently hide them among the cargo, at considerable risk to themselves, for this was a serious offence in the eyes of the authorities.

considerable distance from the capital, a traveller is obliged to make the acquaintance of that curious class of cabbies known in Russia as *isvoschiks*. Although they are attired in long, oriental-looking gowns reaching to their feet, and are crowned with a hat resembling that of a beef-eater, one must not think that these primitive-looking Jehus are half as simple as they appear to be; for inside the garb of childlike simplicity and innocence there often lurks a cunning and a ready wit which are really astonishing to anyone who does not understand the Russian *moujik*, from which class the Russian cabmen are generally recruited. As a rule, it is wise to offer only half the fare demanded, and even then to bargain until a figure is arrived at which is not too exorbitant. In fact, if the man is given what he originally asked, he will be sorry that he did not ask twice as much from the unsuspecting foreigner, while at the same time he will be disappointed at being deprived of the pleasure of bargaining, which to him is the salt of life. Should you by any chance get the better of him, he will usually show his displeasure by driving through the streets at a snail's pace, leaving you to fume with anger at his obstinacy, with the alternative of offering an extra tip if he will hurry. Usually when my Jehu treated me in this way, I would quietly get out of his droshky and jump into another one, much to the astonishment of the deeply offended driver of the first vehicle, whose face, when he finally turned round, was a study. He had lost both his "fare" and the money! These men, however, if treated well, are generally very kind-hearted and willing to drive like a whirlwind if you should be in a hurry to catch a train. On these occasions I have sometimes had to catch hold of the reins and pull the horse in, especially if there happened to be another cab going in the same direction, for a mad race would begin, when I was in constant danger

of being thrown out on the hard cobbles and breaking my neck. Should remonstrance be in vain, the driver, if he has been promised a good fare, will turn round with a grin and console his passenger with one of numerous proverbs: "Life is a copeck,"[1] "You can only die once, so what does it matter," or something in a similar vein.

A kindly smile and a gentle manner will go a long way with these hardy, struggling, long-haired fellows. As an example of this I can quote the case of an English governess who always managed to drive at half the proper fare, because she called her driver *golubbchik* (little pigeon) and smiled on him very sweetly. You might smile like the wonderful cat of *Alice in Wonderland* without much effect on an English or German driver's charges; but in Russia these little matters go a long way. The simple moujik looks with wonder and astonishment on all foreigners, and in his heart thinks them all beneath him, for are they not heretics without the true faith, which is going to ensure him a happy place hereafter, even if at present he does not have his full share of the plums?

On arriving at a hotel a traveller must hand his passport to the proprietor or hall porter. It must be "written in," as it is termed in Russia, otherwise a person may find that he will have to pay a heavy fine, or perhaps even be detained. I have known people to be delayed weeks, simply because they did not attend to small matters of this kind. The passport system may have its disadvantages, but it also confers some benefits on the country where it is in force; it gives a certain hold over the criminal population and anyone who is dangerous to the Government. If people do not pay their trades-people, the police are informed, and the debtor may not leave the country until the debt has been discharged. If a wife leaves

[1] 1 copeck=1 farthing; 100 copecks=1 rouble, about 2s.

her husband she can easily be brought back, for she is not allowed to have a separate passport such as an unmarried woman possesses. If need be, she can be brought back *etapom* (on foot) and sent under convoy from one police station to another until she reaches the place from whence she started. Russian husbands have many privileges which are denied to married men in England, where wives probably have more liberties than the married women of any other European country. Providing a passport is in order, there is no reason why an Englishman, visiting Russia, should be caused any annoyance or inconvenience. As long as he keeps to his own business and avoids politics as one would the plague, a traveller is perfectly safe. If engaged in business or trade, the local policeman expects a certain sum for looking after the tradesman's property. These men are paid a starvation wage by the Government and look to "tips" to help them to exist. The system is an old Tartar survival and has much to do with the corruption in official circles. The Government evidently believe in paying their officials the smallest possible salaries, believing that those who are sensible will make up the deficiency by taking from the Tsar's subjects *podarke* and *nachais* (presents and tea money). So long as this practice does not go too far, it is winked at by the authorities, but if an official is found to be systematically taking advantage of his position, some day he may find himself confronted by a *revisor* (inspector), and a few days afterwards he will be *en route* for Siberia at the Crown's expense.

With regard to the practice of bribing officials, in the days of Catherine this pernicious system flourished in all its glory. It is related that on one occasion, when an official complained to the Empress that his salary was too small, "the mother of her people," as she delighted to call herself, and which she was in more senses than one, replied: "The man's a fool; he

Two very important Personages

The Water Carrier

The "Dvornik," or Yard Porter

has been placed near the trough, but the ass won't feed himself." Peter the Great, however, who had imbibed some Western ideas on this subject, used to whack his ministers without mercy when convicted of corruption, unless by way of a change he took it into his head to hang, draw and quarter them. Nicholas I.,[1] who was much misrepresented by contemporary historians, was extremely particular about his servants taking bribes, and on one occasion, when he discovered that his palace architect had been guilty of corruption and deceit, struck him with his fist and killed him on the spot. But as Russians come more into contact with the people of the West, and as they receive better remuneration for their services, the practice of bribing and taking bribes will gradually die out, especially in those portions of the Empire which are in close contact with the seat of government.

[1] John Maxwell, in his excellent and trustworthy work entitled *The Tsar, his Court and People*, published by Bentley in 1854, gives the following just estimate of the character of Nicholas I.:—"By nature ardent and generous; possessing most noble and most generous qualities; gifted with very considerable mental ability and great personal beauty and bodily strength; his errors are to be regarded as those of position, rather than those of inclination. The cruel death of his father, the weakness and misfortunes of his brothers, and the bloody events attending his own succession to the throne, seem to have determined him to pursue a course of policy more in keeping with a soldier's idea of order and security, than one distinguished for prudence, wisdom and moderation."

II

CRONSTADT, THE KEY OF PETROGRAD, AND SOME MEMORIES

I RESIDED in Cronstadt, the mighty citadel of Russia, the fastness and fortress of the Tsar, for about seven years, making the acquaintance of many of its most important citizens, from the Governor down to the most humble midshipmen. I also knew a number of the merchants, captains of various nationalities, and even became intimate with the peasants, for my occupation then brought me into contact with almost every class of the population—rich exporters and poor moujiks labouring on the docks and timber yards. On the whole, my stay was a pleasant one, though at times I was unhappy in this "Little Siberia," as Russian naval officers facetiously called it. The English captains were even more severe in their criticisms, saying that Cronstadt was "the last place God made," and even then hinting that He forgot to finish it. In this island of forts, barracks, shipyards and cabbage gardens I made some of my best friends, who stuck to me through life, and whose memory I shall ever cherish.

But most of these near and dear ones are no more. Among them was my kind-hearted, book-loving, honest principal, S. K., by whom my taste for letters was greatly encouraged. I can hardly say that this passion for books was conducive to my business success; but inherited qualities, handed down from a learned ancestor who "cared for learning more than the plough," would not be gainsaid, and by a long, slow, and sometimes painful process I became a

scribe—much to the astonishment and vexation of many friends, who would have preferred to see me a wealthy merchant or butcher instead of the rolling stone I appeared to be. My erratic career was a surprise and sorrow to those who could not see whither that same stone was rolling, until it eventually found a suitable niche—even though much chipped and broken.

Cronstadt to me was interesting, not only because it is one of the world's great fortresses, but also because within its walls I had an excellent opportunity of studying Russia in miniature. Here I came to know the massive old Governor, Admiral K., a man of iron, with a head like a Bismarck, a powerful frame, and moustaches that gave him the appearance of a venerable walrus, possibly due to the fact that he had been a seafaring man and a dweller in the icy regions of Eastern Siberia. There was also the Commandant, grey, hardy Admiral B., the faithful servant of the Tsar, to whom was entrusted this key of the island fortress, which prevents all foes from breaking into the capital and laying waste Peter's city. He was of Swedish or Finnish origin, and a great favourite of Alexander III. and the Empress, who when in Cronstadt would dine with him and show him many marks of confidence. He was well worthy of these honours, for all the forts, batteries, powder magazines and dungeons, with their valuable military secrets, were under his charge. The chief forts which guarded the entrance of the narrow channel were those of Menshikoff, Alexander, Peter and Paul, Milutine and various batteries dotting the horizon between here and the capital, which would be brought into action against any vessel which might manage to pass the defences of this Northern Gibraltar. The most terrible fort, to my imaginative mind, was that named Alexander, fitted up as a huge laboratory, where poor, broken-

down horses, cats, rabbits, dogs and other animals were inoculated with many of the germs and bacilli that plague and decimate humanity.

More formidable than the forts, however, are the hidden mines that strew the narrow waterways—to be fired from the shore in case of need by the pressing of a button; the submarines and the torpedo-boats that would dart from every corner, should a squadron ever be so rash as to attempt a passage. Lord Napier did this in the Crimean War, but when several of his ships had been almost blown up by mines manufactured by that great engineer and chemist, Ludwig Nobel, he thought it wiser to beat a retreat, and in the circumstances discretion was certainly the better part of valour. Had the English admiral known that there was another passage, which had been carelessly left open, owing to the venality of rascally contractors whom Nicholas I. paid to block that very channel, but who pocketed the money and scamped their work, he would have tried again, and Petrograd might have been laid in ruins, while the war, which dragged on for three years, would have reached a sudden and dramatic conclusion. When in Cronstadt I sometimes met old soldiers who remembered Napier's attack on the forts and on Sveaborg, and who told how shots were seen to fly over the Island of Kotlin, on which the town of Cronstadt is built. It thus seems that Peter's paradise, as he fondly called the beautiful city he had erected on a swamp, narrowly escaped sharing the fate of Sveaborg, which, during the terrific bombardment by the English and French fleets, was almost a sea of fire. Now, thanks to the Commandant and to my old Irish friend, Fitzgerald,[1] who mounted some of the heavy cannon on the defences at a cost of over a million pounds, Cronstadt may fairly be considered impregnable.

[1] The late Maurice Fitzgerald, a man of unusual talent, afterwards Professor of Geology at King's College, Belfast.

Before I left the place for good, the Commandant, knowing that I could be trusted not to take advantage of his hospitality, showed me the interior of Fort Milutine, with its iron-clad turrets and immense revolving guns. On my expressing surprise that he should show me, an Englishman, this favour, he jokingly replied: "We have no Dreyfuses here." The sly old sea-dog, however, did not tell me that they had a certain Captain Smith locked up in a dungeon in one of the forts for selling plans of the batteries to a foreign Government—the name of which I need not mention—and that others who had attempted to pry into Russian secrets had met a similar fate or a worse one. Nor did he allude to the marvellous defences he had built, after years of labour, on an artificial island, almost invisible at a distance. These low-lying, half-submerged forts, fitted with enormous Krupp guns, were far more effective than the grim, picturesque granite forts around Cronstadt, which could be bombarded from the open sea almost a score of miles away, if necessary, by a hostile fleet.

The three Russian naval officers with whom I resided for several years in Cronstadt were, like the majority in the Russian service, well-educated and travelled men. One was of Hungarian origin, another Swedish, the third German. The first was a fine Japanese scholar, the second a polished gentleman of high connections, and the last a hard-working, stolid Teuton. Although of different nationalities, all were thoroughly devoted to the Russian service. The majority of the naval men I came across spoke English, French and German fluently; most of them came of good families, and had passed through the cadet school at Petrograd or Cronstadt. As a rule the navy officers are more broad-minded and better men of the world than the officers of the line, many of whom are exceedingly rough customers, knowing no tongue or country

but their own. As Cronstadt was usually frozen up for half the year, little experience of navigation or of ocean voyages was to be obtained; it was quite an event for one of my friends to be sent for a cruise, and any who had the good fortune to make a voyage round the world were ever after spoken of with great admiration; one would think, indeed, that these favoured individuals were so many Drakes or Frobishers, judging from the respect and awe they enjoyed among their comrades. Under such conditions, it is not to be wondered at that the Russian fleet came to grief at Port Arthur and Tshushima. A sailor can hardly become proficient in his calling when, for months together, he has nothing to do but repair ships which, like their crews, are rusting for want of use. But if the brave fellows—many of whom I knew—fought unskilfully owing to lack of practice, none can accuse them of cowardice. Their ships were sunk without being able to return the fire of the Japanese, at a range of six miles. Among those who took part in this conflict was one of my young pupils, who was afterwards saved, the only survivor of his vessel's crew; they all stuck to their posts as long as there seemed the least prospect of victory, or of effective retaliation. These mishaps, and the general impressions left by a study of the naval events at Sebastopol, Port Arthur, and also of the happenings of the present war, when a portion of the Russian navy was again bottled up in Cronstadt, Libau and other ports, lead me to conclude that the pure Russians are not a seafaring people; like the old Romans, they are at their best on terra firma. It is difficult for a nation to be great both on land and sea, and the desire of the Germans to excel in the two totally different spheres has much to do with their failures.

Even if Russia occupies Constantinople, the north of Sweden and Norway—on which she casts longing

eyes—I doubt whether she will ever become a first-class maritime power, as long as the Finns and Lithuanians are not reconciled to her rule. Both these races make excellent sailors, but the ordinary Russian looks upon the ocean as an accursed element for any sensible human being to adventure upon; with him *mòre* (sea) rhymes with *gòre* (woe).

Although the Duma, after the Japanese War, voted one hundred millions sterling towards rebuilding the navy, that money has to a large extent been wasted; it might have been put to far better use in purchasing more artillery and army equipment, and in the construction of a better system of strategic railways. Russia really requires a fleet in the Baltic for coast defence, and a few battle cruisers for her high sea fleet. At that time the Ministry of Marine was severely criticised in the Duma. It was considered that the nation ought to have possessed sufficiently strong naval power to avoid the previous disasters, had the money devoted to the navy been properly applied, but it may not be too late for the lesson to be learned.

I had many opportunities of observing the Russian methods of navigation. When the General Admiral came in his yacht to inspect the fleet and fortress, it often happened that the officers on the bridge managed to run the yacht ashore at the entrance of the harbour opposite Fort Menshikoff, which seemed to look impassively and grimly down as the excited sailors ran about the ship like so many worried ants in their endeavours to float her off. As a rule they had to wait until the wind veered round from the sea, deepening the water at this particular spot. Great was the joy on these occasions, and the good-natured Admiral—the late Grand Duke Alexis—would show his gratitude to the captain by bestowing on him a cross. There seemed to exist a tacit understanding that it was

quite natural in those days that an officer should run his ship aground, but that it was a heroic feat to get her afloat again! The Imperial yacht was not the only vessel continually misbehaving in this way; a large flagship named after the Grand Duke often stuck fast, and the exertion of refloating her must have been the crew's most exciting duty. On a visit from one of these high officials, or from the Tsar, all work in the inner and outer harbour had to cease—to the disgust of English captains, who could not understand that such an event should make it necessary to bring all shipping activities to a standstill. But they did not know the Russian proverb, "Go slowly and you will get farther," which is tantamount to saying, "Time is *not* money."

One of the saddest things I remember in connection with Cronstadt was the execution of a talented, handsome young naval officer outside the city gates, for taking part in a conspiracy against the Tsar Alexander II. Although this monarch liberated the peasants from serfdom, and carried out many reforms, he fell by the hand of an assassin, Risakoff—who was, after all, but a tool of some members of the nobility who had been injured by the Tsar's advanced ideas. Well do I remember the day the Tsar was carried wounded to his palace to die, for two of my friends were present when the bombs were thrown, and were almost deafened by the explosion, while a third, an officer in the Royal Bodyguard (*Tsarskoe ochran*) was struck on the head by a splinter from one of the shells and hurt for life. In the twenty-six years of my residence in Russia I saw three Emperors on the throne; of these Alexander II., the Tsar Emancipator, appealed most to my mind and heart. Never shall I forget the mournful expression of his eyes, or his look of weariness and pain. There were many attempts on his life; perhaps the most terrible was when the Nihilists tried

to blow up the Imperial Palace at the moment its occupants were expected to seat themselves for dinner. The concussion was so violent that I heard it distinctly in Cronstadt, eighteen miles from the capital. I was sitting at the table of a friend, when a muffled, rolling report shook the glasses. The mine, which had been laid beneath the palace, had detonated, and about forty officers and men of the Imperial Guard were killed. The Emperor, the Grand Dukes and other members of the family would have shared the same death had not their dinner, for some unknown reason, been delayed; on those few minutes hung the fate of the Romanoffs, for practically the whole of the family were assembled on that evening, except the Grand Duke Constantine. By chance he, who was always suspected of being a "Red"—that is, secretly in favour of revolution or a more liberal regime—was staying with the old Governor of Cronstadt, whom I have already mentioned. Curiously enough, on this night the Grand Duke's coachman died suddenly; ill-natured people say that he was aware of the plot and committed suicide, fearing detection. Nothing was proved against the Grand Duke, but for long afterwards he remained under suspicion of sympathy with the revolutionists. Eventually, being in disgrace on account of his "advanced" opinions, he retired to his beautiful palace at Pavlovsk, near Petrograd, where he died. There are many strange and mysterious enigmas in Russian history, and his attitude throughout this political struggle is one of the most interesting.

In an important naval centre such as Cronstadt the question of spies is naturally often to the front, and for some reason or other the authorities seem to fear women more than men in this connection. The beautiful heroine of one of Mr Max Pemberton's tales was a woman spy, who, in order to seal the hero's mouth regarding the secrets she stole, was married to

the impressionable young officer ; he, of course, helped her to escape and thus saved himself and his fiancée from lifelong captivity. But this character was purely imaginary, whereas I knew a lady, now living in London, who narrowly missed becoming involved in very serious trouble, owing to a perfectly harmless yet suspicious curiosity. She had been invited by certain officers to come on board their cruiser and look round, and, accepting the courtesy with pleasure, was shown the guns and their mechanism. When in one of the huge turrets she innocently inquired if it "moved on a pivot." "Pivot!" exclaimed her escort, instantly alert, "what do you know about pivots?" Thinking that she was undoubtedly a spy in the guise of a simple English tourist, he immediately blew a whistle, and my injudicious friend heard the tramp of armed men hastening down the steps of the turret. Without demanding any explanation, the officer called out: "This woman is a spy; arrest her at once." She was being taken off to a cell, when she luckily saw the captain, who, she knew, understood English. In great indignation she informed him that his "fool of an officer" had mistaken her for a spy and ordered her arrest; moreover, she said that she was a British subject and that the man would pay dearly for the insult unless she was set free at once. The captain, an intelligent and travelled seaman, inquired into the matter, and, seeing that a mistake had occurred, ordered her to be set at liberty. Whether the officer had received instructions to arrest all inquisitive persons, or whether his imagination had been heated by reading about the attractive lady spy of Cronstadt, I cannot say, but this little incident shows how extremely dangerous it is to betray even a slight knowledge of technical matters in Russia, given certain surroundings.

My first lessons in the Russian language were given

THE STEAMER *YERMAK*, DESIGNED BY ADMIRAL MAKAROFF, BREAKING ITS WAY THROUGH THE ICE OUTSIDE CRONSTADT

me by a handsome young artillery officer who hailed from the Baltic Provinces. Although of German blood, he was very hostile to the Germans, and looked forward to the day when Russia and Prussia (as he called Germany) should cross swords and pay off old scores. His feelings, however, underwent a great change after the Russianising of the University of Dorpat and the closing of many ancient schools in the Baltic Provinces—some of which dated from Hanseatic times and the Middle Ages. These and other attempts to Russianise the "Balter," as the inhabitants of the Provinces are called, so embittered him that he informed me that should the Prussians march into that district he and thousands of his countrymen would welcome them with open arms.

The Admiral of the Fleet at Port Arthur, who commanded the ill-fated *Petropavlovsk*, which went down with its brave captain and the gifted artist, Verestchagin, was another resident of Cronstadt. I never met Admiral Makarieff, but shortly after his death I encountered his handsome wife and daughter. It was he who designed the remarkable ice-breaker *Ermak*, which keeps Cronstadt, Libau, Reval and other Baltic harbours open for a month longer each winter than was possible before its construction. Those who journey to Russia by sea in the spring will often see this powerful vessel pounding her way through ice-floes and cutting a navigable channel for the traffic. Built by Armstrongs' of Newcastle, the *Ermak* is capable of ploughing through ice eighteen inches thick at a speed of eight knots. It is a fascinating sight to watch the horses, sledges and men close to her, perfectly safe on the firm surface, while she breaks a passage for ships; the ice, in fact, will bear a railway train and its locomotive without giving, and by this expedient of a temporary line the winter loading of ships is frequently facilitated.

"Little Siberia" was not without its compensations for English exiles, chilly though its surroundings may seem to those familiar only with more temperate realms. When harbours and roads and the Gulf of Finland were frozen for hundreds of miles like a sheet of solid glass, we young men would sally forth with skates and cover immense distances in the utmost exhilaration. So transparent is the ice that the fish, and rocks at the bottom, fathoms deep, can be clearly seen. At other times we would charter an ice-yacht and skim along the smooth surface with arrowy speed to some destination where a good supper and a cheery *samovar* was ready to greet us. If the Gulf chance to be covered with snow, sledging parties would be arranged to Oranienbaum, the fine summer resort opposite Cronstadt and the seat of the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg; or we might sledge half the distance to Petrograd, shooting *podoroshnikee* (snow-birds) on the journey. At the half-way house the inner man could be refreshed with *koroschke*, a kind of smelt, almost straight from the fishing holes of the frozen Gulf. Duck and snipe were plentiful in the marshes, and in the season I have spent many a peaceful night with my boatman, the faithful Ivan Ionoff, after these birds, waiting until dawn flushed the sky. Then the wild duck began to emerge from their reedy nooks, where they lay during the hours of darkness, and with the sharp report of the guns our long vigil was rewarded with a brace or more of plump victims. I have seen the snow-white ice, in early spring, blackened with thousands of these birds. If it would seem that the long waiting must be tedious, spent in our fragile dug-out canoe (*tchelnock*) made from a single log, there are the exquisite sunsets and sunrises to set off the account. Tea from a simmering samovar at sunrise on the marshes is an experience to be treasured in the memory. On one occasion I nearly lost my life in a

quicksand when tracking a bittern which I had winged, but not killed. In my hurry to secure it I became half submerged, and had it not been for the good Ivan, who risked his life to save me, these reminiscences would certainly not have been written. The bittern, which I found at last, nearly pecked my eye out in its fury, so the adventure on the whole was not one of my most distinguished.

There were other dangers of a totally different character. Sometimes while we were busy in the marshes the spent bullets from the rifle-butts would come whizzing past our heads, and it occurred to me that many of the Russian soldiers must have been shockingly bad shots!

In the evenings other pleasures were accessible—those of the dance and masquerade, where the Polish mazurka and the polka were given with the animation and abandon which one can only find in Russia—the home of the dance and the ballet.

III

A ZEALOT OF CRONSTADT

At that time the city of Cronstadt was the home of a very remarkable man, whose fame spread over all the land—Father Sergius, popularly known as Otetz Johann, or Father John, as I shall call him. He was born in the village of Sursk, Archangel, in 1829, and completed his education at the Petersburg Ecclesiastical Seminary. In 1855 he was appointed as one of the priests in the Cathedral of St Andrew, Cronstadt, and it is now more than fifty years since the young man turned to the people and expounded the great commandment: "Love your neighbour." For about half-a-century he consistently endeavoured to carry out the precept by dedicating his whole life to the doing of good to the thousands round him, no matter how degraded their condition. At the beginning of his ministry, when his means were of the scantiest, this good man gave to the poor almost all his stipend, contenting himself with bare necessaries, but afterwards, when his fame had reached throughout the Empire, money was sent to him from all parts to spend as he thought fit. Year by year these contributions increased in number and value, until "The Saint of Cronstadt" was able to undertake works of charity beyond his wildest expectations. I have known him to receive in one day thousands of roubles, and to give them all away by the evening. Such inordinate charity naturally induced many sturdy vagabonds, called *Pasadsky*, to settle in the town and exploit the priest's generosity to a shameful extent. But this was not for long, and when Father John established

his workhouses, or homes for "lovers of labour"—as he termed the lazy incompetents—they did not trouble him so much.

The unbounded veneration of the people for this good man arose from the fact that he was not only a priest, but a teacher, a preacher, a benefactor and a clever organiser and stimulator of labour among the lowest dregs of humanity, many of whom he lifted to their feet when all hope of redemption had been abandoned. Many would consider his charity beyond reason. With an income amounting to many thousands of pounds a year, Father John seldom had a spare rouble in his pocket for the needs of to-morrow. I have been told that he had been known to give away entire bucketfuls of roubles, the contents uncounted, to the consternation of the donors and the horror of his wife, who could not soar to such heights of altruism. In every village he was spoken of, and rich and poor, nobles and peasants travelled hundreds of miles to see him. His portrait was in scores and hundreds of dwellings, by those of the Emperor and Empress. Hardly a minute passed when he was not pestered on all sides, and he continually received letters and telegrams from those who believed in him. In these all kinds of requests were made—he was asked to administer the Sacrament, to heal the sick, to visit the hospitals and to perform many duties of similar character. On his arrival at the pier in Petrograd by the Cronstadt steamer I used to see Father John surrounded by swarms of droshky-drivers, each one anxious that the holy man should honour him by riding in his conveyance. In Cronstadt he could scarcely go into the street without being followed by crowds, and whenever he attended service he was the centre of a throng, some of whom begged alms, while others strove to kiss his hands or seized the hem of his long clerical robe. On these occasions he would make

the sign of the cross, and take from his purse a few of the coins with which his admirers so plentifully supplied him. Many of the requests of the people no human being could fulfil—it was a troublesome rôle, that of a saint!

Father John had a great passion for observing strictly the customs of the primitive Christian Church; he carried on divine service in the manner of the early Christians, and all the congregation joined in the singing—not a general practice in the Russian churches, where it is usually confined to the choir.

Most of the common people believed that he could perform miracles. This, however, he did not profess to do; he said his healings were by the power of prayer. It may seem incredible to some, but there is no doubt that many sick persons were cured by this remarkable man; whether it was the power of faith—the mind working on the body for its benefit—is not easy to say. The fact remains, and in consequence his reputation grew by leaps and bounds. Whatever opinions may be held as to his gifts, he was no ordinary man, for had he been of average calibre he could never have acquired such vast influence—not only over the people, but even over their rulers. The Tsar Alexander III. had a great opinion of this worthy priest, and it is believed that he expired in Father John's arms. The present Tsar also used frequently to send for Father John and ask his advice on various questions relating to the people, as he was gifted with strong common-sense, and understood the simple moujik as well as any man. Had the Tsar been more amenable to this guidance, we should probably never have seen a large portion of Russia ablaze with the fires of revolution, for what Father John said was law to millions of the Orthodox in all parts of the land.

The belief in "The Saint of Cronstadt" extended even to other and foreign members of the community.

Father John of Cronstadt: considered by the people to be a saint

The Cousins: the Tsar and King George

I have known many instances of English and Germans, when seriously ill, sending for him because ordinary sources of help had failed.

Father John contributed towards the erection of many beneficent institutions, but it can hardly be said that his influence had in it anything of a progressive tendency. With all his Orthodox Christianity he could not overcome his inborn national antipathy for the Jews, and when the horrible riots occurred at Kisheneff he did not condemn these fanatical and barbarous outrages as a follower of Christ should have done. Naturally this attitude did not affect his popularity with the lower classes, as, being sprung from the peasantry, he thus showed that he was not above their narrow prejudices. He and his followers at last became a nuisance to the authorities. Many flocked from the south of Russia, a thousand miles or more away, to Cronstadt, in order to pay him divine honours, believing him to be an incarnation of Christ, who, according to the peasantry, comes upon earth at stated intervals in the person of some good man. Of course this was too much for the Government officials, and often the credulous moujiks were locked up by the unbelieving police of Cronstadt. On the latter inquiring how the prisoners could be so wicked as to worship a sinful man like themselves, they used to reply: "The sin is not ours, but of the other people of Cronstadt." "How could you live so many years with such a good man in your midst and not worship him?" Nothing could be said in answer to these naïve remonstrances; nothing could be done but send the superstitious ones home to their own villages. But this did not help, and the Father had to travel thousands of miles to put an end to this new phase. Among the places he visited on this mission was a village in the government of Kostroma, where a peasant named Artamonoff consecrated a chapel to "the most glorious fellow-champion,

Johann Elias Sergius in the Trinity"!! On hearing of this, Father John hastened to convince the people of their error, going from village to village, tearing down the icons, images of himself, which the peasants were worshipping. Arriving at one place, he went straight to the church belonging to the sectarians, who were adoring his own icon, and explained to them what a great sin they committed by regarding him as a saint. "I am just as sinful a man as all others," he said. "Therefore pray to God to forgive you." He then read texts from the Scriptures, besought them to give up their heresy and to repent. For a long time the sectarians listened to the oration in silence, then, after a pause, one exclaimed: "Forgive us, Little Father—forgive us, accursed ones!" while others fell on their knees, weeping, not daring to look up into his face. The Russian correspondent who describes the incident says: "Father John regarded these ignorant men long and sorrowfully, who through ignorance had fallen into error. On leaving them he exclaimed: 'Pray ardently before the throne of the Almighty, that He forgive your great sin before Him!'"

Many a time have I met the priest pacing the broad streets of Cronstadt, surrounded by a throng of wretched beggars and ne'er-do-wells, all hoping that he would bring some happiness into their darkened lives or at least temporarily relieve their wants by a shower of copper coins. Finally, I became so interested in this mediæval survival that I ventured to call on the priest at his residence near the cathedral. I found his ante-room full of religious humbugs and parasites, busy extracting large fees from all who wished to see him. They demanded two or three roubles for each interview with the Father, whom I could see if I would wait a quarter of an hour. I was so disgusted at the mercenary spirit of these hangers-on that I immediately quitted the house, and never

entered it again. These unscrupulous wretches eventually exploited Father John's adherents to such an extent that the Government was compelled to interfere and abolish some of the sects that were founded in his honour. The Johannites, as they termed themselves, went into all sorts of absurdities, seriously announcing that he was God's own Father, descended from heaven in human shape; one woman posed as the Mother of God, and another person claimed to be the Archangel Gabriel. According to their teachings, only Johannites could be saved—other mortals were possessed by evil spirits. Their principles were simple and very practical—viz. in order to be saved people should sell all their worldly possessions, but should not give the proceeds to the poor, but to the monasteries or religious houses of the sect. Evidently the intention of the leaders of this new movement was to gather in as much earthly dross as possible; they traded on the good name of Father John, and on the various "Mothers of God" and "Archangels" who now began to spring up like mushrooms in this hotbed of superstition. Before the police suppressed this harmful activity there were thirteen Johannite monasteries in Petrograd alone. It was in the country, however, among the millions of simple, illiterate peasants, who still live under mediæval conditions, that the Johannites reaped their richest harvests. The most devoted and fanatical teachers and preachers were chosen and sent to the governments of the interior, where they employed every art to capture the masses. Their methods were as follows:—After they had convinced their victims of the divine origin of the so-called "Saint," and inspired in them a mysterious terror of damnation and the wiles of the Evil One which threatened all who were not of their faith, the preachers began to occupy themselves in more practical ways. The faithful were induced to sell all their land and

goods and to set out for Petrograd, together with their families, and take up their abode in one of the religious houses. Once immured thus, they came under the domination of various impostors, "archangels" and so on, who robbed them of their last copeck. The only resource of the impoverished victims, after this process of fleecing, was to remain in the monastery, absolutely in the power of the prior and prioress. Many shameful injustices and exactions were thus inflicted on the deluded people, but Father John, whose name was simply used as an attraction and an excuse, cannot be held responsible. According to his lights, he was an honest, consistent Christian, whose simplicity was traded upon by wretches who were incapable of understanding his goodness or his faith.

Father John died as he had lived, striving to the last for the people's welfare. As with all that is human, he was not perfect, and he was steeped in the superstition of the class from which he rose; but it is not for us, who have advantages that were denied to him, to criticise a man who usually did more good in a month than most of us do in our lifetime.

IV

SOME CRONSTADT CHARACTERS

Some few years ago a talented English novelist delighted his public by writing a story founded on an imaginary Cronstadt, which existed only in his fertile brain. Being no novelist, I can give no such soul-harrowing picture of this gateway of the Russian Empire. Whatever people may say of the town—and some have said most unpleasant things—it will always be associated in my mind with the saddest, and also with some of the happiest, hours of my life. Here I made the close friendship of one of the most lovable principals—a fiery, happy, honourable man, of Welsh descent, whose influence over me was for my good. Here, in contrast, a severe chill nearly terminated my career, and sent me wandering all over Russia and Europe in search of health, or of relief from the malady that remained.

The English chaplain, whose memory will always be cherished by all who knew him, was one of my best friends. In the comfortable, solidly built vicarage of the Russian Company he used to keep open house, dispensing hospitality " like a fine old English gentleman, all of the olden time," and in the whole English colony it would have been hard to find a warmer-hearted or more talented man. There seemed to be nothing our chaplain could not do. Father O'Flynn was not to be compared to him, although both were genial Irishmen—genuine sons of Erin. Father M'Swiney could take tea with the ladies, dance and troll out a good song ; he was a splendid artist, and the beautiful altar-piece of the Crucifixion in the

English chapel at Cronstadt is one of many worthy products of his busy brush. As a linguist he was extraordinary; he spoke Russian, German, French and his own native Irish tongue with equal facility, and was an excellent Latin and Greek scholar. As a former officer in the King's navy, and a fine sailor, he dearly loved a fight, and sometimes would "let off steam" by removing his black coat and thrashing any of the hulking giant carters whom he caught ill-treating their poor horses—for he had the courage of a lion. When complaints of the strange proceedings of the English pastor were made to the Governor, they were dismissed with a chuckle, and the exclamation: "Never mind him—he is an Englishman, and cannot help being a bit mad!" Occasionally our chaplain would have arguments with the Governor, and once told him that if any news of preparations against his Majesty's navy came to his ears, he should consider it his duty to report them. The Governor was not at all disturbed by this outburst; he knew that whatever the excitable Irishman might say, he would never abuse hospitality or act meanly in any way. His two sons, who were descendants of one of Nelson's admirals, were chips of the old block; both died high in the service of their country, one as a colonel, the other as a major.

On his retirement, pensioned, he was succeeded by a saintly scholar, an intimate friend and co-worker of the great Canon Farrar, and collaborator in the *Life of St Paul*. But as most readers are probably more interested in sinners than in saints, I will not describe this worthy man. Our last chaplain was the Rev. Father R., who as a young "blood" had run through a fortune of £20,000 at his university town; he then became a Cowley monk, and afterwards entered another branch of the Church. In appearance he was a typical Friar Tuck, tall, boisterous, with a head as

bare as a billiard-ball and a voice like a bull; neither saint nor scholar, he was yet thoroughly up in the classics, and had a heart of gold. He could preach like a Savonarola, when stirred by pity or indignation, but his great delight seemed to be in hearty drinking and the telling of yarns—some of which were perhaps of a racy tendency; his laughter shook the rafters of the vicarage. This, of course, shocked many of the "unco' guid" folk, who did not understand him. At times, when his congregation consisted of a solitary captain, he would slap his audience on the shoulder and whisper: "Don't stay here listening to me—come into the vicarage and have a glass of whisky!" The captain missed—or did not miss—an indifferent sermon, but would be treated to an excellent supper and some good liquor, and would go home blessing the chaplain of Cronstadt, who comprehended so well the weaknesses and wants of a sailor-man! All this may not have been strictly clerical, but it pleased the old salts who came from every part of the British Empire, and was possibly more effective than the methods of his predecessor, who, endeavouring to win our sailors from their temptations of "wine, women and song," substituted for these attractions chess, draughts, books and tea! The proclivities of the old sea-dogs could not be changed by such mild relaxations, and our Friar Tuck, who would have given his last coin to help anyone in distress, was perhaps the more acceptable exponent of religion in this peculiar sphere.

These remarks concerning the last man who held this position in Cronstadt may not be out of place, as the chaplaincy has been done away with, and the church and vicarage, which I knew so intimately, have been sold to the followers of Father John, the Saint of Cronstadt.[1]

[1] The Rev. Father R. is now no more, and died, missed by hundreds who remember his kind heart and generous nature. He has left a family far from well provided for.

Our population of 50,000 included the garrison of 40,000, and among these artillerymen, infantry, marines and sailors there were many characters who would have adorned the pages of Gogol's notable satire on Russian official life, *Revisor*. The sudden reforming zeal of the police-master, who shortly after his appointment became a strong supporter of the temperance movement, was therefore hardly appreciated by these devotees of Mars, Venus and Bacchus. Most of all was he unpopular with the publicans and sinners, who in Russia keep the *trakters* (tea-shops), beer and wine shops and hotels. In order to impress upon them the excellence and beauty of temperance, he would make unexpected raids, declaring that it was a sin that there should be so many public-houses, and that it was sacrilege that wine-shops should exist so near the cathedral and holy buildings; they must be closed. The proprietors were privately informed, however, that if they would give two or three thousand roubles to the new temperance movement they would be forgiven, and their establishments would be re-opened! In this manner the wily police-master soon amassed a large fortune. But his career came to an abrupt end. As Cronstadt is in constant communication with Petrograd, close at hand, news of his activity reached the authorities. An inspector was sent from the Department of State Control, and in due course our energetic police-master disappeared into the wilds of Siberia. His successor was no better. This upholder of law and order not only fleeced merchants and publicans, but actually robbed the police and fire brigade men of their beds, and sold their clothes to enrich his own pockets. Under his rule I saw men, when arrested, call to the crowd: "Take my money, comrades—I have fallen into the hands of the police!" Whereupon the victim would throw his cash among the people in the hope that some

honest soul would retain a portion of it, being also aware that once it was secured by the guardians of the law he was not likely to see it again. This all happened, however, when vodka reigned supreme, and the State monopoly on the spirit had not been abolished.

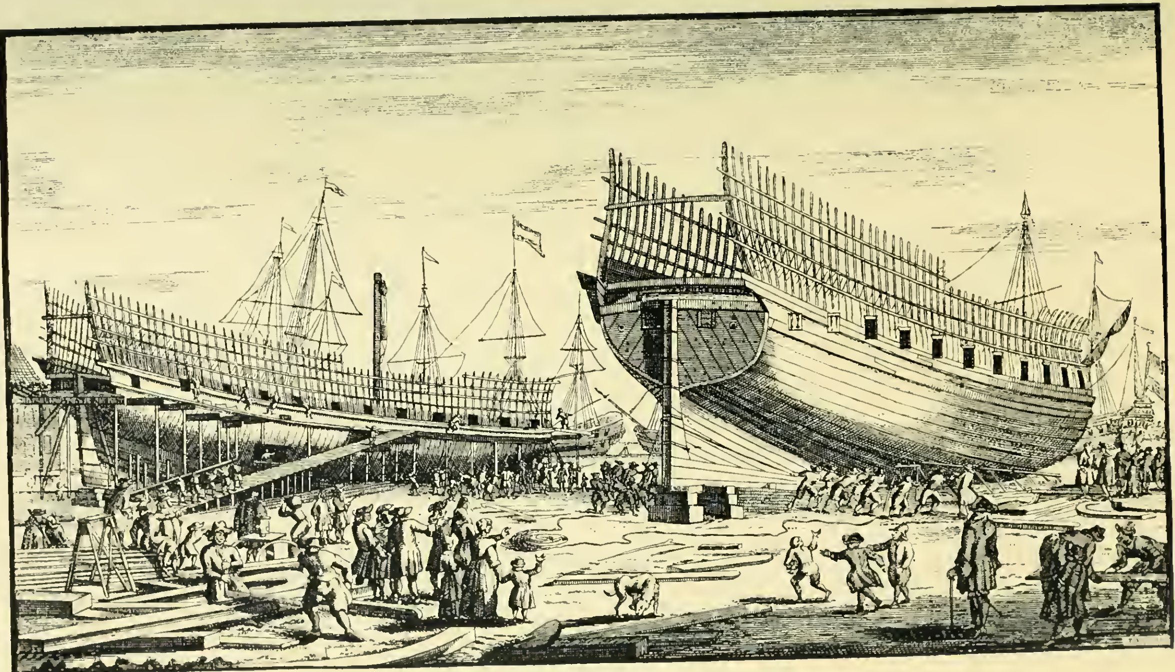
Our bank director was another person of original views on morals. After robbing the bank and feathering his own nest, he also was transported to Siberia, where he managed to pass a very comfortable existence on his "savings" and "investments," although he was never allowed to return to Russia. As the crimes of both these officials were non-political, they had comparative freedom in their new homes, being permitted to live much as they pleased. In Russia the punishment for civil offences is light, but political offenders are treated with the utmost severity. It is thus far safer to rob a bank, or even to kill a man, than to plot against the Government or to belong to the revolutionary party. Truly "Holy Russia" is a strange, incomprehensible land!

V

THE FOUNDING OF PETROGRAD

The capital of Russia was founded by that barbaric genius, Peter the Great, in honour of his patron saint. In a comparatively short span of time—a little over two hundred years—in spite of a mortality that has often reached thirty-five per thousand, it has become one of the largest and most important cities of Europe, capital of an Empire stretching from the Gulf of Finland to the Pacific Ocean.

Long before Peter took it in hand, it was the site of a thriving colony of the merchants of Novgorod the Great, and a place of considerable commerce. Even before the conquest the Roos and Gothland vikings from Varjag (Sweden) used to come down the Neva and enter Lake Ladoga, from thence finding their way to Novgorod—the old name of which was Holmgard. In course of time the connection of the Varangians on the eastern shores of the Baltic with their kindred in the west was broken off, and Novgorod became a powerful independent state, with territories extending from Lake Ilman to the White Sea and eastward to the Ural Mountains. The southern shore of the Finnish Gulf was also a part of the great possessions of this free republic, and the very spot on which Petrograd now stands was a portion of ancient Russia, inhabited by heathen Finns and a few Swedish and later on Hanseatic merchants. Even in the tenth century the shippers of Novgorod, who were mostly Norsemen, carried on, with the aid of the Gothlanders, and subsequently with the help of the Hanseatic traders, a lively intercourse with the rest of Europe. In fact it was



Building Ships for Russia's Commercial Marine in the days of Peter the Great

From an engraving by Renar

by the Volga-Ilman-Ladogo-Neva route that the wares of Central Asia were brought to England, long before the Conquest. Peter, although a descendant of those Muscovite rulers who had destroyed the prosperity of that great republic, was such an admirer of Alexander Nevsky, the heroic Grand Duke of Novgorod, that he transferred his bones with ceremony to Petrograd, and erected a splendid monastery on the spot where they finally rested. The remains of the quondam enemy of Muscovy now rest beneath a shrine of silver about two tons in weight, at the monastery at the end of the Nevsky Prospekt, named after him.

Petrograd did not pass into the hands of the Russians without many a sanguinary struggle on the banks of the swift Neva. In one of these crusades against the heretics, by order of the Pope, the Swedes, under their famous General Berger Jarl, were surprised by Alexander Nevsky and defeated with great loss. This battle, which took place on the banks of the River Ishora, a tributary of the Neva, occurred in 1240. In 1300 the Swedes again managed to establish themselves and to build a fort on the spot where the Nevsky Monastery now stands. The name of this fortress was Landskrona, but before long it was destroyed by the Novgorodians, who would not on any account give up this most important strategic point. In the seventeenth century, after the destruction of Novgorod the Great by Ivan the Terrible, the Tsar and Grand Duke of Moscow, the Swedes once more for a short period gained possession of the banks of the river, and built another defence at Ochta, a pretty spot higher up the stream opposite the Smolna Monastery, which I have frequently visited. The name of this new fort was Ny-skantze. It soon became the centre of a flourishing town, and towards the end of the century owned more than a hundred ships. In order to defend the source of the river the Swedes

built still another powerful fortress at Schlüsselberg, called Noteborg and by the Novgorodians Oreshka (walnut)—a suitable name, for it was a very hard nut to crack for any who essayed to capture it. Schlüsselberg was given its present title by Peter the Great, who delighted in calling the different places he built by German and Dutch names, to the scandal of his Muscovite subjects, who even in those days detested everything German or foreign.

After a struggle with Sweden, which lasted for twenty years, Peter captured Noteborg, Ny-skantze and other strongholds, but not until Sweden was quite exhausted and only her old men and boys were left to continue the unequal war against Russia and her Allies —Poland, Prussia, Saxony, Denmark and Norway. In 1703 Peter firmly established himself on the Neva, and from that time Sweden's energies waned, until she could hardly maintain her position as a second-class power.

On 29th June 1703 Peter laid the foundation of the new capital of his Empire, to the disgust of the Muscovites, who regarded Petrograd as the gateway of the infernal regions, if not Hades itself. As for Peter, he was charmed with his fresh project, and often referred to the place as his paradise, though if heaven be such a place as this was when he founded it, many sinners would perhaps prefer to be condemned to the lower spheres. He termed it the "window looking into Europe," and worked at his capital with that ferocious energy and zeal peculiar to his nature. Nothing was allowed to stand in his way now that his mind was finally centred; not the forces of nature, or the lives of thousands of "ordinary mortals," could prevent him from making his great city. The Moscow party might rave, the priests might excommunicate him and fulminate curses against him as Antichrist, but he replied by putting them into dungeons or

cutting off their heads. When his only son, Alexis, the tool of the party of reaction, stood in his way, he also was sacrificed for the future good of the State, just as Brutus sacrificed his two sons for the sake of Rome.

The stones of the city were laid with great ceremony. According to a legend, which has perhaps been borrowed from Roman history for the occasion, Peter cut out of the island two pieces of earth, and placed on them a cross, saying: "Here shall be a town"—which, with a man of his character, was tantamount to saying that the town was already there. At that very moment, relates the legend, an eagle appeared in the heavens. Peter then dug a trench, in which was deposited a stone box with some saintly relics. This was covered with a slab bearing an inscription relating to the founding of the city. The eagle, in the meantime, interested in the proceedings, circled round, and at last settled on two small birch-trees; it was then shot, and Peter took it with him to his camp at Schlüsselberg. *The Russian Messenger*, the first Russian paper, writing about this event, says that "his Imperial Highness on reaching Petersburg ordered a new and more convenient fortress to be built. In it were six bastions, on which worked 20,000 men. This fortress was that known as the Peter and Paul, so situated that it commands both sides of the city." Thus Peter sat, as he expressed it, "with a firm foot in the sea." His city soon rose from the forests and marshes that surrounded it, to the astonishment of the neighbouring states and of his own orthodox, conservative subjects, who regarded the Tsar as a madman and as Antichrist, whose coming had been foretold in the Bible.

During the construction of the town the Tsar lived close to the Peter and Paul Fort, in a little house, which I believe is still intact. Wherever he went, Peter erected these small houses, for though a giant

in stature, he preferred to live in a small, stuffy cottage rather than in a palace. An enterprising man soon opened a Hosteria, as he called it, near by, and there Peter used to refresh himself with brandy and cayenne pepper, one of his favourite beverages. He had also another *kabak* ("pub") opposite the Admiralty, where I have spent many an hour reading the Russian papers and endeavouring to learn from them what was happening in this country.

Nothing seemed to check Peter's enthusiasm or to damp his energy, not even a terrible inundation which in August, 1703, converted his camp into a marsh and undermined the walls of his newly constructed fortress. His disappointment was more than compensated for by the arrival of the first Dutch vessel in "Sankt-Peterboorgh," as he termed his town, in honour of the Dutch, whom he so greatly admired. To impress his people with the importance of the event, he himself steered the ship up the Neva, and afterwards gave the captain several hundred ducats, treating him to cayenne brandy, schnapps and all the dainties he could think of, in his little dwelling.

The work did not proceed, however, with sufficient speed to suit the Tsar's ambition. He ordered merchants, tradesmen, landowners and masons to come forward, under heavy penalties if they disobeyed. They came—cursing Peter and his outlandish heretical ideas, which they were convinced boded no good to Holy Russia. Peter promulgated a decree in 1714 that all building in stone should be forbidden throughout Russia, the punishment of disobedience being ruin and exile to Siberia. He also wrote to Prince Romanodoffsky to send him 2000 thieves and robbers, and to collect all who were deported to Vologda and Siberia; thus he obtained a horde of workers. The historian who quotes the letter adds that this is not a joke, for many of the buildings of the city were erected

by criminals. By such heroic methods the capital began to grow. In 1704 there were 15 houses; in 1709, 150; in 1714, 485. It is estimated that on the death of its founder the city contained about 100,000 inhabitants. The idea of placing his beautiful capital on this marshy, unhealthy spot of quagmires and floods was only finally decided upon after the battle of Pultava, when Charles XII., wounded and with half his army lost through frost and cold, was defeated. After the death of Peter there was a regular stampede of all those who did not wish to reside in the "earthly paradise." But when Catherine II. succeeded to the throne Petrograd again began to flourish, for she was a great admirer of Peter, and erected a splendid statue in his honour, which is still to be seen facing the Neva, near the Isaac Square.

The older portion of the city is the Petersburg Storona, or Petersburg Side, behind the fortress, low-lying and damp. Formerly this part was inhabited by the poorer classes, but it has now become quite a fashionable quarter, with many handsome streets and fine houses built in that solid style only to be found to perfection in northern lands. The southern portion of the Neva bank, now populous, has been enlarged only within recent years. Catherine II. probably did more for the beautifying of the "Northern Palmyra," as she poetically called it, than any other monarch since the days of Peter. Many of the noblest palaces owe their origin to her liberality and love of architecture. It was she who began to confine the unruly waters of the Neva, ever striving to burst their bounds, with those miles of massive granite quays, lacking which the river would lose half its beauty and dignity. At the present time this vast city of magnificent distances occupies an area of over 300 square kilometres.

The whole place is arranged in a manner reminis-

cent of New York, especially the Vasilii Ostroff (Basil Island), which Peter originally intended to lay out like Amsterdam, with canals and lines of trees along their banks. This plan was subsequently abandoned; the canals were filled up and converted into boulevards and streets.

Petrograd of to-day is not only a residential town and the seat of Government; it is also an immense industrial centre. In its immediate neighbourhood are many mills, shipyards, breweries and glass works, giving employment to some hundreds of thousands of men. These in their turn give a good deal of work to the police and to the secret police, who are constantly on the watch to put down any revolutionary or socialistic tendencies in this huge population, whose members, since the influx of so many English, German and French workmen, have become "tainted with the advanced ideas of the Rotten West," as the officials picturesquely express it.

VI

THE YOUTH AND GROWTH OF PETROGRAD, WITH SOME HISTORICAL NOTES

PETROGRAD, to use the words of Oostrajloff, " arose under the cannon-shots of the Swedes," who were constantly attacking the fortifications while the town gradually grew amid the marshes. One of the hottest of the engagements took place at the entrance of the river. The Swedish ships, taken by surprise, were boarded and captured by Peter, with the aid of a number of boats and galleys under his own command, and he was very proud of this achievement. The place where the war galleys were kept is near a low-lying street behind the English church, called the Galernaja, and one of these strange craft—which I believe are simply a copy of the old Venetian war galleys—is exhibited every year on the Neva, when this victory is celebrated with great ceremony.

According to Russian historians, it was never Peter's original intention to build so near the mouth of the river. All his energies were at first centred on the construction of a fortress commanding the outlet, and a port, the remains of which are still to be seen, known now as the " Gavan " (The Haven). Peter III., the grandson of the founder, was one of those backsliders who fled from the city at the death of Peter the Great; he returned to the Kremlin, the home of his Romanoff forefathers, whose mediæval house still exists inside the walls. The Empress Elizabeth, Peter's granddaughter, who secretly married Count Razumoffsky, was no more faithful, and little by little Petrograd became emptier and emptier. But although Elizabeth

preferred to live outside the city, she took great pride in its improvement and enlargement, and it was during her reign that the architect Rastrelli not only began the Winter Palace—probably the finest Imperial residence in Europe—but completed many important public buildings, much to the benefit of the new capital.

When at length Catherine II. brought back her Court in all its splendour, and summoned to her side many of the brilliant men of the Continent, the old-fashioned Muscovites and some of the pleasure-loving nobles, vegetating on their estates in the lonely provinces, began to realise Petrograd's attractions. It was no longer necessary to compel the nobility to reside in the place where a second Zenobia reigned. Many of their own free will flocked thither, and soon it became one of the gayest and most popular cities in Russia. At this time the population numbered about 300,000. Catherine carried out Peter's ideas on a scale of grandeur that even his colossal mind might have shrunk from, for, with all his ambition, Peter was practical, while with Catherine extravagance and vanity were the ruling passions. Under her, Petrograd assumed symmetry and beauty. She planted trees along the banks of canals, and fell in love with her own work, and, intent upon her delightful task, induced many eminent men to settle there by costly presents of money, jewellery and watches. Petrograd, during her reign, was divided into Police Quarters, in the manner of Paris. She built a marble palace for her favourite, Gregory Orloff, who obliged her by strangling her husband and thus removing the most formidable obstacle to her ambition—which was to become the ruler of the Russian Empire, from the Baltic to the Pacific. It was no longer necessary to issue edicts threatening heavy penalties to those who refused to live in the city. It grew rapidly, and,

PETROGRAD IN THE DAYS OF CATHERINE II. VIEW OF THE FORTRESS AND THE PETROGRAD QUARTER

From a drawing by Paterson, 1791

though far from healthy, was a centre for such as cared for gaiety, intrigue, dissipation and extravagance—all of which Catherine sedulously encouraged, both by precept and example.

Her son, Paul, who had been brought up under Prussian ideals, spent most of his time in erecting barracks, drilling halls, hospitals, churches and other buildings; to him is due the once beautiful Michael Palace, now called the Castle of the Engineers. The costly work of encasing in granite the river's banks, the River Fontanka and the Catherine Canal was also carried out regardless of labour and expense.

Alexander I., the son of Paul, who, with the help of the Allies, broke the power of Napoleon, directed his energies to the outskirts of the town. He improved the sanitary arrangements, a reform which was sadly needed. In 1814, on the centenary of the founding, he formed a committee to consider the question of new hydraulic works. He also in the same year invited Daniel Wheeler, a well-known Quaker, to come from England, and entrusted him with the arduous task of preparing about 5000 acres of land for agricultural purposes. Thanks to this practical old Quaker, Petrograd is now well provided with market gardens and cabbage-fields—seen at their full extent on entering the town by rail. Victoria strawberries are grown in abundance at Pargolo, Shoovalofva and other environs, and in the summer months are very cheap; apples, pears, raspberries and other fruit to which we are accustomed, however, do not seem to thrive in the northern climate and uncongenial soil.

Nicholas I. also did much for the city. During his government the principal streets were paved—more or less badly—and the divisions of the place were fixed. Official records give the population as 150,000 in 1759, 308,000 in 1812, and 580,000 in 1864; at the present time it is about 2,000,000.

Petrograd retains even now its reputation for unhealthiness, but by the enterprise of certain members of the municipal council this reproach is gradually being removed. It used to be so unhealthy that it was said that if the country people refrained from coming to the town for a period of fifty or sixty years the place would be deserted completely; also that it was only due to the "unmarried mothers" that there was any increase at all. Perhaps it is for this reason that Petrograd is so plentifully supplied with foundling hospitals, without which probably the population would never have attained its present proportions, for in Russia, as in France, the "unmarried mother" is often a benefactor to her country, even though she may be considered a nuisance by "respectable" society.

For administrative purposes the city is divided into twelve parts and thirty-eight subdivisions (*oochastocks*), each small portion being under the control of a police officer called a Nadzeratel. The chief quarters are: the Vasileffskaja—the favourite residences of the English, German, Dutch and foreign merchant classes are here; the Wiborg side, on the right of the Neva; the Great Nevke, inhabited principally by Finns; the Kazan quarter, lying between the Moika, Catherine and Krukoff canals, devoted mainly to business and shopping; the Kolomna quarter, between the Neva, Fontanka and Moika canals; the Letenaja; the Moscow quarter; the Narvsky quarter; the Petersburg side; the Roshdestvenskaja and the Spasskaja quarters. There are also four others, favourite residential resorts owing to their salubrity and numerous gardens and parks—the Ljesnaja, the Peterhoff, the Polustroff and the Schlüsselberg quarter, stretching along the river banks. The Polustroff quarter, once famous for iron springs, is part of the old Swedish town of Nyshants. It is

situated on high ground and is a healthy district. Here I spent many pleasant days wandering round the grand parks or drinking the waters of the neighbouring iron springs.

Notes on the House of Romanoff

In this work such frequent reference is made to the Romanoff dynasty that the following table of those who have reigned since the founding of Petrograd will be useful and convenient. The emperors and empresses of this house, since the city's inception, are:

Peter the Great (son of the Tsar Alexsjevitch) ruled from	1721–1725
Catherine I., his widow	1725–1727
Peter II., Alexsjevitch	1727–1730
Anna I., Johanovna	1730–1740
Johan VI., Antonovitch (who perished in Schlüsselberg)	1740–1741
Elizabeth I., Petrofna	1741–1761
Peter III., Theodorovitch	1761–1762
Catherine II., of Anhalt Zerbst	1762–1796
Paul I., Petrovitch	1796–1801
Alexander I., Pavlovitch	1801–1825
Nicholas I., Pavlovitch	1825–1855
Alexander II., Nicholaivitch	1855–1881
Alexander III., Alexandrovitch	1881–1894
Nicholas II., Alexandrovitch	20th Oct. 1894

Peter the Great, the founder of Petersburg—now called Petrograd—reigned from 1682 to 1725. Many of the palaces, gardens, canals and chief buildings were planned and finished in his time. Among these may be mentioned the fortress, built in 1703, the Summer Palace, 1711, the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, 1715, and the college or university, 1722.

Peter was succeeded by his wife and former mistress, Catherine I., who is said to have died through her fondness for confectionery, some which she took being probably poisoned.

The next ruler was Peter II., who died in 1730, after an uneventful reign. He was followed by the pleasure-loving Empress Anna, Duchess of Courland, whose Court became noted for licentiousness and dissipation. The Admiralty and the third Winter Palace were erected in her period. Under her the secret chancellery, a court resembling our notorious Star Chamber, was installed, governed by the cruel Biron, her handsome favourite. It is said that both the Empress and he took a great personal interest in watching the effect of the various tortures inflicted in this hated institution. This Empress, whose policy was influenced by the unscrupulous Duke of Courland, died in 1740; the Empress Elizabeth then reigned until the year 1762. She was secretly married to Count Razumoffsky, and is said to have had several children by this courtier. In her reign the present Winter Palace was built by Rastrelli, the Summer and the Anitchkoff palaces, and the Cathedral of the Smolna Monastery.

The unfortunate Peter III. followed, husband of Catherine II., the ambitious German Princess Sophia Augusta Frederica of Anhalt Zerbst, who, after the death of her husband, ruled Russia for about thirty years. In her reign many extensive works were carried out: the granite embankments of the Neva, by Rinaldi; the Academy of Arts, built by Felton; the Courts of Justice on the Letennaja, by Delamot; the Armenian church, by Basheneff; the State Bank on the Fontanka, by Staroff; the Taurida Palace, and the Mechail Palace; also the railings of the Summer Gardens. These railings used to be thought so beautiful in design that an eccentric Englishman once travelled all the way to Petrograd merely to see

them, returning immediately his wish was gratified! The Kazan cathedral, on the model of St Peter's at Rome, built by Gvorenge, also dates from this period, during which Russia extended her domains in all directions. The capital of Mingrelia in the Caucasus, Kutais, was taken in 1771; the whole of White Russia was torn from Poland in 1772; the Crimea and the Kuban province were annexed in 1783; New Russia in 1774; the whole northern shore of the Black Sea in 1791; Volynia, Podolia and the province of Minsk in 1793; Lithuania in 1784, and Courland in 1795. In fact Catherine, although a German by birth, did more to extend the area of Russia than any monarch except Ivan the Terrible and Peter the Great, both of whom added large stretches of territory to the Empire.

The half-mad Paul I., assassinated at the Mechail Palace (now the School of Engineers), succeeded Catherine, and reigned from 1796 to 1801. Paul, who admired everything Prussian, built the old Mechail Palace, also many barracks and riding schools of huge proportions and massive architecture.

The magnanimous, gentle Alexander I. then reigned from 1801 to 1825. In this period the Smolna Institute, the Admiralty and the Imperial stables were all completed.

Nicholas, the "Iron Emperor," ascended the throne, and during his reign the Alexander Theatre, built in the purest classical style, came into being. Like Paul, he had a mania for everything military. He also originated many of the barracks now to be seen in Petrograd, Sebastopol and other centres, and some of the fortresses. He was much aggrieved at his inability to capture Constantinople and make himself head of the Balkan Christians. He died suddenly, in 1855.

Alexander II., who reigned until 1881, was assassinated by Risakoff on the banks of the Catherine Canal. His period saw many beautiful buildings added to the

city. Since, in recent years, the French and English have lent Russia so many millions of capital, the hotels and public buildings have been erected in far better material. When I first arrived in Russia even the palaces were of brick, stone, or stucco, but now one sees many fine palaces entirely of stone, faced with granite or marble. As the wealth flows in from abroad, Petrograd becomes more and more magnificent, and will eventually be, at its present rate of growth and adornment, one of the grandest cities of the Continent.

VII

THE RIVER NEVA AND THE GREAT FLOODS

The Neva, which carries a greater volume of water than any other river of its size in Europe, is Petrograd's peculiar charm; without this stream the city would lose half its beauty. Probably through no other capital do so many waterways flow—the Big Neva, the Little and Middle Neva, and numerous broad canals which were once small rivers meet the eye continually. The Fontanka, the Catherine and the Oboocheff are the most noticeable, and in the summer these are busy with shipping of every description, from the long barge as big as a schooner to the modest lighter. In spring, when the ice begins to move, many of the barges are torn away and ground to pieces, until they are little better than matchwood. The Neva is then unsafe for foot traffic, and many a careless moujik loses his life at this period, and disappears, carried by the ice-cold stream beneath far into the Finnish Gulf, where the battered and bruised body of the victim of the river god at last finds a rest. In order to render the ice less dangerous the municipal authorities have, in recent years, constructed electric tramways from shore to shore, illuminating the route brilliantly, and the effect at night is exceedingly beautiful.

The total length of the river, which rises at Schlüsselberg, is only sixty-three versts.[1] In some parts, however, especially opposite the Smolna Monastery, it is as much as 2100 feet across, and so deep that the largest steamers can load and unload in safety. The

[1] 1 verst = ⅔ of a mile.

stream is very rapid and treacherous, with a number of eddies and cross-currents, particularly near the Nicholai Palace bridge. If a man slips in he is generally drowned, unless he is an exceptionally good swimmer, for he is sucked under with such force that he seldom rises more than once. I have seen several drowned in the Neva, and in every case the unfortunate one vanished just as a boat seemed on the point of rescuing him. On one occasion a would-be suicide threw himself from the Nicholai Bridge and was saved with extreme difficulty—to the great indignation of the peasants round me, who expressed the decided opinion that "the police had no right to rescue him; he was tired of life, and wanted to die in the arms of Matooshka (mother) Neva. It was his own affair, and no one need interfere in his private arrangements." The Russian peasantry have a quaint way of looking at these matters, and their peculiar philosophy much impressed Tolstoi, Dostoieffsky and other famous thinkers.

Besides the canals already mentioned, there are thirteen small ones, more than twenty lesser streams, and various branches. Naturally many islands are formed, and these are connected by about 150 bridges, some of which are of considerable size; of them twenty-two are stone, thirteen are of iron and five are suspension. In fact Petrograd is a city of islands, rivers, canals and bridges; so much so that one of Gogol's comical characters is made to affirm that the bridges were built in such a devilish manner one would imagine they were hung without any attachments! But this discovery was probably made on some moonlit night when returning from a carouse, so cannot be taken very seriously. When I was last in the place, one of these structures suddenly collapsed and precipitated many persons into the river. It was very shaky, and the wonder is that it stood so long or was

Photograph by W. B. Steveni

THE DEEP AND RAPID NEVA, WITH VIEW OF THE NICHOLAI BRIDGE

Photograph by W. B. Ste...

A CROWD ON THE NEVSKY PROSPECT: A "PRAZNEK"

allowed to remain so long before strengthening. But in Russia no one is ever in a hurry, and that the bridge should at last break was doubtless *vola Boshe* (the will of God) and not due to the fact that it had rusted through. It was built in the ancient Egyptian style, of cast iron ; the approaches were adorned with huge sphinxes and the sides decorated with bas-reliefs copied from an Egyptian temple.

Owing to its low-lying position and its proximity to the Gulf of Finland, Petrograd has suffered terribly from inundations from the very beginning of its existence. Pushkin, the Shakespeare of Russia, describes vividly the flood that swept over the city in November, 1824, comparing the havoc wrought to the violence of a band of robbers :

> "O'er darkened Petersburg
> November breathed with Autumn blast;
> Splashing in noisy tide
> Within the confines of her ordered sway
> The Neva tossed in her restless bed
> Like one who is sick
> Or like a bandit,
> Who, with his fierce robber crew
> Breaks into a village, pursuing, killing, wrecking,
> With shrieks, violence, and alarms;
> Then, with plunder laden,
> And fearing pursuit, hastens homeward
> Dropping his booty on the way."

Since then the city has witnessed many similar scenes. Such a catastrophe is a sublime spectacle, especially if it happens at night. Often, instead of retiring to rest, I have spent a good portion of the night in wandering along the banks of the Neva and its inky-black canals, listening to the moaning of the wind, the shouts of the people, the booming of the guns from the Peter and Paul Fortress. The cannon give timely warning to the townsfolk that their old enemy is again laying

siege to their city, as though endeavouring to reconquer the territory snatched away.

The indefatigable genius who dared thus to build on a delta of low and swampy ground did not hesitate at the most heroic efforts; he spared neither himself nor his men, and eventually lost his own life from the effects of a chill, caught while rescuing some soldiers from drowning. A splendid bronze group, representing Peter saving the men near the mouth of the river, has been erected on the Admiralty Quay, near the Panieff Theatre. It is said that many thousands of men succumbed to marsh fever before his beloved work rose like Tyre from the midst of the waters. But although Peter could bend his unwilling subjects to his stubborn will, he failed to tame the elements. He and his successors constructed costly canals to carry off the floods, yet a large portion of the city is submerged whenever a gale from the Gulf forces the sea-waters into the Neva. The cellars of the house in which I resided have often been swamped for days together at such times, and the flood is of an icy coldness always, explained by the theory that the ice at the bottom of the river, carried down from Lake Ladoga, never completely melts, even in the summer.

In 1706 Peter wrote that the water, during a flood, covered the entire floor of his palace. A greater inundation, however, occurred in 1824, when most of the city was under water. Very many persons were drowned, and property worth millions of roubles was destroyed. Autumn is the worst time, shortly before the closing of navigation. At the first sign of danger the gun-fire begins—though it is often unheard in the clamour of the storm—and red lights are shown from the Admiralty. The inhabitants in the lower quarters then gather up their goods and chattels and seek the more elevated parts of the town, or mount to upper rooms. In one flood, not many years ago, the

Botanical and Zoological Gardens were for some time quite under water. The result of this enforced icy bath was that a large number of valuable animals from tropical or warmer climes perished miserably, either by drowning or through the intense cold. Lions, tigers, leopards, monkeys shivered and made pathetic struggles for liberty, the keepers striving to assist, with the water up to their waists or even to their shoulders. Thinking that some might escape, the cages were carefully opened, but this was of no avail—the helpless creatures were carried by the current into wide spaces of the gardens, and lost. Among them were four bears, three Indian oxen, two antelopes, an ostrich, four eagles and many other exhibits which had been collected from all quarters of the globe. Of course numbers of domestic animals also perished. Still more tragic scenes were in progress at other parts of the city. Workmen, endeavouring to save their wives and little ones, were swept off their feet and drowned. In the night shelters the water reached the ceilings. The wretched inmates scrambled to the top of the stoves and on any high place for safety. The confusion was indescribable. Cries of "We are drowning—save us!" and screams for assistance were heard on all sides. Towards morning boats came to the aid of the panic-stricken people, who, wet and frozen, threw themselves into the arms of their rescuers. In the cellar basements (notwithstanding many Imperial ukases, these are the homes of thousands) heartrending events took place. Boats approached the windows of these subterranean domiciles, if we may so call them, and removed through the windows half-frozen, terrified children, who were immediately conveyed to the tea-houses, or to the homes of friendly folk, who warmed and fed them as quickly as possible. In this good work soldiers, sailors, students and ladies emulated one another with that self-forgetfulness so

peculiar to the Russian temperament when it is once stirred to sympathy. Other poor wretches fared worse, having to pass the whole night, starved, under the bitter November skies—which to many simply meant death. The district bordering the Galernaya Harbour suffered the worst, but the 9th Line on the Vasilii Island, where for many years I lived, was converted into a second Venice. The wish of Peter, who desired his city to be "another Venice," was for once fulfilled, but not precisely in the way he had imagined. On the Petersburg Side, the oldest neighbourhood, and the first to be built, water seemed to be everywhere. Some of the streets were barricaded by enormous barges, which had been lifted bodily out of the river by the flood, to drift helplessly at the will of the waters and to settle thus awkwardly, where they remained until broken up by their owners. On the Viborg Side, still inhabited to a great extent by Finns and aliens, many were awake all night in fear. Floating craft of all kinds were torn from their moorings and hurled by the raging torrent against the massive granite buttresses of the iron bridges, which shook and vibrated under the unusual strain. Later on they broke loose and whirled down like so many chips, until at last thrown on the banks damaged beyond recognition, or sunk, holed and wrecked.

The beautiful islands formed by the ramifications of the stream, summer resorts of the citizens, were entirely cut off, and their inhabitants were unable to leave the houses. Most of all the Island of Elagen suffered, for the dams which kept out the sea were invaded, while the canal sluices, supposed to protect the islanders from inundations, were rendered useless. In addition to this, all the Government buildings belonging to the Department of the Court were flooded. What this means only those who have lived in Petrograd can tell. The loss to tradesmen and shop-

THE CATHERINE CANAL

From a painting by Professor Bogoluboff

keepers was tremendous, for the shops on the Grand Moskaja, Vosnesenskaja, Ismailoffskaja and other important streets were flooded with dirty water, and tea, sugar, flour and other provisions were ruined to the tune of thousands of roubles.

In the Gavan, or low-lying part of the town, the water reached the ceilings, and furniture floated about the streets. By midnight measurements proved the flood to be three feet above the ordinary level. From one o'clock it rose rapidly, until by nine in the morning it stood nine feet above the normal level of the Neva. For sixty years such a disaster had not occurred.

A few persons still living remember the year 1824, when hundreds were drowned and immense amounts of property were destroyed. This flood occurred in the reign of the Emperor Alexander I. The Winter Palace stood like a rock amid the stormy sea, the waves dashing against its strong walls, the spray washing the windows of the upper storeys. Many vessels were lost, and the shores of the river were encumbered with all kinds of wreckage and rubbish. The Vasilii Island was a remarkable sight. On all sides heaps of ruins, bodies of men and women and domestic animals. After the waters subsided the carcasses of 3600 head of cattle were taken outside the bounds of the city and destroyed. Sheets of iron from roofs were blown about like feathers; in the streets floated coffins and crosses, uprooted from the graveyards—it is even related that the waters brought to an Englishman the coffin of a friend he had buried but two days before. One old merchant, living on the Viborg Side, heard, on the morning after, the cry of a child. He found a poor infant which had safely weathered the storm and flood in a sugar-box! Needless to say the good-natured merchant adopted this modern edition of Moses, as one might expect an Orthodox Christian to do.

The Emperor showed his sympathy for the victims by giving a million roubles (£100,000) out of his own private fortune towards the relief of the dire distress, and nobles and merchants vied with one another in making princely donations to the same worthy object.

VIII

THE GREAT FLOOD OF 1777; THE DEATH OF PRINCESS TARAKANOFFVA

The most terrible inundation of all took place on 8th September 1777, although the water rose only ten feet seven inches—*i.e.* not to such a level as in 1828, when a small merchantman floated over the granite quays right past the Winter Palace, whilst another, laden with apples, was carried seventy feet from the shore into a forest. The Empress Catherine wrote an account of this inundation to Grimm, a German writer. Among other interesting incidents she mentions that a three-masted vessel was thrown up on the quay, whilst the waters of the Neva washed the grand staircase of the palace. "Oh, my God," she wrote, "the Exchange has changed its place, and Count Munich will have to build the Custom House on the site of the Hermitage Theatre. . . . How many broken window-panes! How many pots have been upset with flowers! This morning not a single hairdresser will visit any lady. . . . The big window has fallen down on the ground alongside the table where the dessert was standing, but the dessert is left intact." Further, the Empress writes: "I am dining at home. The water is going down and you know I am not drowned. . . . But enough of the water; we will talk of the wine. My cellar is full of water and God knows what will happen to it." Such are extracts from one of the letters a great ruler wrote at this critical moment. Window-panes, flower-pots, hairdressers, her wine cellar—these all seem uppermost in her mind; not a word about the hundreds of poor

wretches that were being drowned in the neighbourhood. But she apparently thought of them afterwards, when her flower-pots, her hair, her wine cellar and other grave matters of state were attended to. At that very moment, opposite her palace, the beautiful Princess Tarakanoffva, who claimed the throne, was probably struggling for dear life against the rising waters that threatened to drown her in one of the cold and damp casemates of the Peter and Paul Fortress. For a time it was believed, and naturally so, that this beautiful and accomplished woman was actually drowned thus, but historical archives subsequently revealed the fact that she succumbed to consumption, increased by living in the dungeon, which must have been flooded whenever the river overflowed its banks.

According to Danileffsky, the celebrated historical novelist, the Princess, after undergoing a mock marriage to the unscrupulous Count Orloff, one of Catherine's favourites, was enticed by him on board a Russian man-of-war at Leghorn and conveyed by force to Petrograd, when she was thrown into the fortress where she met her end. As her story is one of the saddest tragedies that was ever penned, and as her death was at least partly due to one of these terrible inundations which practically rendered her prison uninhabitable, a brief account of this remarkable woman will not be amiss. In the words of the historian, Solovieff:

"A young girl of very humble origin, a native of Prague or Nürnberg, endowed with the most marvellous beauty, clever and enterprising, but of extremely equivocal conduct, shone from the end of the year 1760 till the beginning of 1770 at Berlin, London and Paris, lavishly spending on her dress and pleasure the money she levied from her admirers. We are bound to believe that her charms were extra-

THE LAST DAYS OF THE BEAUTIFUL PRINCESS TARAKANOFFA IN THE FORTRESS. BELIEVED TO BE THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF PETER THE GREAT

ordinary, for, notwithstanding her conduct, several highly placed personages, both in France and Germany, sought her hand. In the summer of 1774 the Princess Radziwill,[1] accompanied by a numerous suite, set sail for Constantinople. But they stopped at Ragusa, wishing to ascertain beforehand what kind of reception they were likely to meet with at the hands of the Sultan. Count Orloff was, as is well known, in Italy at the time; he lost no time in writing full particulars concerning the 'false' Tarakanoffva to Catherine, from whom he received orders to 'steal' the pretender and so cut off the intrigue at the very outset. Orloff surrounded the Princess with spies, and, through his emissaries, tried to inspire her with confidence in himself. He persuaded her to come to a rendezvous at Pisa. Here he paid her all possible homage; balls and fêtes succeeded each other in swift succession. He pretended to fall in with her plans, and eventually offered her his hand. All this time he was only waiting for an opportunity to arrest her without causing any scandal. He had not long to wait. One day the Countess Zelinski, as she called herself, expressed a wish to visit the Russian squadron then stationed at Livorno. Orloff gave orders for preparations to be made for a magnificent reception, and arranged some splendid naval manœuvres. He himself, with his suite, accompanied her on board; the manœuvres began; the cannon fired; sails were unfurled, and the ships sailed out into the open sea. The unfortunate pretender eventually found herself shut up in the fortress of Petrograd. Here it is said she languished until 1776, when she was drowned by the rushing of the waters into her prison; but this is not true. Documents prove that she died of the same illness from which she was suffering when she came

[1] A descendant of the celebrated Princess was imprisoned at the Cape on a charge of forgery, which she indignantly denied.

to Russia, and which of course made rapid strides during her confinement in the damp dungeon."

With all due deference to Solovieff, who was more or less an "official historian," there is very good reason to believe that the unfortunate Princess met her death indirectly owing to the inundation, and, what is still more sad, she was probably no pretender at all, but had a better right to the throne than Catherine—which would explain the anxiety of the Empress to get rid of her. She claimed to be the daughter of the Empress Elizabeth and the granddaughter of Peter the Great. As regards her claim to the throne, the Danish writer Wahl, in his work, *The Land of the Tsar*, says that "Catherine, who had not scrupled to sacrifice her husband to her ambition, also knew how to get rid of other possible pretenders to the throne. Ivan was assassinated in his wretched prison. In 1763 a daughter of the Empress Elizabeth and Rasumoffsky, the master of the Imperial hunt (secretly married to Elizabeth), who had been quietly living at Pisa, was carried off and disappeared at Cronstadt." [1]

Whether the Princess disappeared at Cronstadt or at Petrograd is immaterial. The fact remains that she was kidnapped by the orders of Catherine, and perished in the fortress, whilst her child by the unscrupulous Count Orloff was taken away from her. Her sad end, after such a brilliant career, has been made the theme of both painter and novelist, but who thinks of the thousands of poor wretches whose dwellings are flooded every autumn by the rising of the Neva, or filled with the foul sewage proceeding from the drains and cesspools of the town? "When

[1] Those who are interested in the tragedy of this unfortunate Princess should read *Princess Tarakanoffva: a Dark Chapter in Russian History*, published in 1891.

the waters abated," writes one correspondent concerning the last inundation, "it was possible to form some idea of the extent of the damage. One-third of the population of the inundated part of the city had caught severe colds and were laid up. Medical help there was none; all the lower basements were soaked, and gave out an insupportable, horrible smell. It was, of course, impossible to live in the damp rooms, and the inhabitants had, where possible, to seek other lodgings." The misfortune is that lodgings and flats are so scarce and so dear in Petrograd that the majority of the poor wretches had to pass the winter in these filthy, damp and poisoned dwellings, where doubtless many of them succumbed to typhus, diphtheria, or, what is worse, to the slow and painful death by consumption, and other complaints begotten from living in dwellings not fit for dogs. No wonder Petrograd is one of the most unhealthy cities in Europe.

Owing to the great misery and misfortune caused by these periodical inundations, the Petrograd Town Council created in the vicinity of the harbour a house of refuge, where the inhabitants of the low-lying districts can take shelter every autumn when the Neva overflows and the angry Baltic comes rushing over the dwellings. They can remain in this warm and comfortable asylum until the floods abate and things are normal again. The house is built on an elevated piece of ground, so that all who flee from the devastating waters can remain there, dry amidst the most terrible floods.

The soil of a large portion of the city consists of artificial hillocks, under which there is a thin layer of sand and grey clay; water is revealed by boring a few feet under the surface. The drinking-water is very unwholesome and has a very deleterious effect on the health of all who are not accustomed to it. As it

contains a considerable quantity of magnesia, it is extremely harmful to the teeth, and causes the hair to fall off rapidly. Owing to these peculiar qualities it is to be expected that dentists and hair specialists do an excellent business in the city. In the space of three or four years I have known people to become quite bald through drinking the Neva water, and also many people to die from the same cause.

The water, which is exceedingly soft, is excellent, however, for making tea in the Russian manner. This was so much the case that the Emperor Alexander II. is said to have carried several casks of it with him for this purpose when he travelled in the country. The ignorant lower classes have the most primitive ideas about sanitary laws, and the death-rate is exceedingly high. The greatest number of deaths are owing to diseases of the stomach and intestines. These complaints carry off thousands annually. Notices are usually posted up in the principal hotels, warning strangers not to drink water from the Neva, but as these warnings are generally in the Russian tongue, they are of little use. When the American fleet came to Cronstadt a great many officers who visited Petrograd were laid up several days through drinking the water taken from the Neva, which they found in their bedrooms. I also knew an English captain who lost his wife in twenty-four hours through drinking the water at Cronstadt, which is even worse than that of Petrograd, owing to its often being brackish.

Attempts have been made in recent years to bring the beautiful spring water from Duderhoff, a group of low-lying hills in the vicinity of the city. The water of this place was so much prized that when I was a resident in the capital it was sold at one shilling a bottle. Owing to the extensive system of drainage that is now being carried on and the improved waterworks, Petrograd is gradually becoming more healthy,

but it will take many years before it is as salubrious as London, Paris or Berlin. The sudden changes of temperature, the damp and inclement climate, especially in the autumn and winter, are exceedingly trying to the health of delicate people. In order to withstand all these disadvantages one must have a constitution of iron and internal parts as tough as leather; when these are lacking, sooner or later there will be a general breakdown of the whole system.

London is not the only city that has a monopoly of foggy weather, for there are whole days, especially in spring, autumn and winter, when Peter's paradise is enveloped in thick fog; at others the broad streets and great empty squares are swept by piercing winds. In general the climatic conditions are nothing to boast about, but the city has many attractions, and in some respects is so fascinating that I have often heard its citizens state that they would not exchange it for any other town in Europe. Of what the attractions consist I will explain in another chapter, but probably Petrograd will always be notorious for its damp climate and cold winds. This is not astonishing, considering that it is not only built on a marsh, but is close to the sea and surrounded almost on all sides either by rivers and canals or morasses. Water seems to be everywhere—above, below and around. This is so much the case that within the confines of the city there are at least forty rivers, canals and streams. An Italian ambassador once said of this city that it was always winter—in summer there was a green winter and in winter a white winter; that was the only difference. Some people predict that sooner or later the river will sweep the city out of existence, but so many canals have been constructed to take off the surplus water and to prevent the Neva overflowing its banks that I think the terrible catastrophe will be averted. All the public buildings and the palaces are

built in a very solid manner on enormous blocks of granite. They are so strong that not even the great floods can move them, but should it ever happen that the S.S.W. winds from the Baltic continue to blow for a week at a time, it is quite possible that a considerable part of Petrograd would be demolished.

IX

PETROGRAD DURING THE REIGN OF ITS FOUNDER; AND AN ACCOUNT OF PETER'S COURT AS SEEN BY PRINCESS WILHELMINA OF PRUSSIA

PETER, in gaining a firm footing on the shores of the Neva, was following the traditions of the rulers of Novgorod and his Roos-Varangian forbears, who, together with the Arabs, seem to have been pioneers of commerce in Russia. The great number of Anglo-Saxon and Arabic coins that have been found near the upper and lower reaches of the Volga give mute witness to the interchanges of former years, and though the subject is hardly within the scope of this work, it is a fascinating trail to follow. Most of the coins discovered on the banks of the Neva and in the Galernaya Harbour of Petrograd date from the eighth and ninth centuries. Many of the Arabic ones belong to the reign of Haroun-al-Raschid, the popular ruler whose adventures as set forth in *The Arabian Nights* are still a source of enjoyment to lovers of Eastern life and literature. Among the finds was a kettle in the Gutaieffsky Island, in 1797, containing silver coins dating from A.D. 780, minted during the reign of Megda, the third Khalif of the Abbassides dynasty. A still more important discovery was made on the shores of Lake Ladoga, which was a place of transhipment for goods brought from ancient Bulgaria, Itel (the old name of Astrachan) and the lands beyond the Caspian. Twelve versts from the mouth of the Volchoff, in 1766, a peasant found a barrel of Arabic (Cufic) money, weighing several poods, and of great value; these were minted at Cufa, a town on the Tigris. Thousands

of similar coins have been found in Gothland and round Lake Maelar in Sweden, brought by the vikings who traded with Russia before the old routes became neglected.

The long struggle between the Novgorodians and the Swedes, and afterwards between the Muscovite Tsars, for the outlet of the Neva is an evidence of the importance of this waterway and of the land on which Petrograd has been built. For centuries the blood of Novgorodians, Muscovites, Finns and Swedes reddened the limpid river, until Peter, with the aid of Saxony, Poland, Prussia, Denmark and Norway finally broke the power of Sweden and added the Ishora to his already extensive Empire.

In the sixteenth century idolatry of the most revolting character prevailed in this region; the worship of forests, hills, rivers and the offering of human sacrifices were common. Even the children were immolated, and traces of these horrible customs still exist among the Finnish tribes of the Volga. Tree-worship and the belief in forest spirits were common, and round the capital spots are still to be found where the accompanying rites were practised. Most of the sacred groves, where on Midsummer Day the superstitious people sang, wept and danced round immense fires (bale), were cut down by Markarie, Archbishop of Novgorod. The human sacrifices have been forbidden, but on that day the Finns even now dance round their sacred fires in the remoter parts of Scandinavia.

The little islet on which Peter built his fortress was called Elesaree, Finnish for "Hare's Island"; another was named Hervasaari, or "Elk Island," as it was a favourite haunt of the elk, which still survive in considerable numbers in Finland and the interior of Russia. This place is now occupied by the Petrograd

A Masquerade in the days of Peter the Great (1722)

From an engraving

Exchange, a classical building on the model of an ancient Greek temple. Opposite are two triumphal columns to commemorate a naval victory over the Swedes. It was not till 1711 that the city began to be populated by Russian merchants and noblemen, but some of these were compelled by Imperial decree to reside in the capital, under threat of heavy penalties for disobedience. At first the houses were generally one storey high, and built in a fashion similar to one which Peter erected with his own hands. This he termed "a model after the Prussian manner," for he was obsessed by Prussian ideas and ideals. His subjects at last became so indignant, hating, as they did, everything *Njemetsky* (German), that serious riots broke out in Moscow, Kazan, Astrachan and many other parts of "Holy Russia." The inhabitants were scandalised at such heretical and anti-Christian innovations, and among the first to suffer was the unfortunate Tsarevitch Alexis, who put himself at the head of the Old Moscow party, and was imprisoned, with death to follow. The Streltzee, Peter's own bodyguard, who revolted, and whose only crime was their ignorance, conservative ideas and superstition, were brought in thousands to Moscow, to be executed in the Red Square of the Kremlin before the Cathedral of St Basil, round a low circular enclosure known as the Lobnoe Mjesto—the Place of Execution. Here Peter, who had hurried all the way from Holland to quell the uprising, superintended the slaughter. "Seated on a throne, he witnessed the dying agonies of two thousand Streltzee, and when tired of the rack he compelled his nobles to complete the destruction with the sword. With a wine-cup in one hand, a scimitar in the other, he swallowed twenty bumpers and cut off twenty heads in a single hour, and, as if proud of the achievement, invited the ambassador of Prussia to try his skill. Eighty of the guilty

Janissaries were subsequently held up by the hair before the crowd and decapitated by the hand of the infuriated Tsar" (Maxwell: *The Tsar, his Court and People*, page 143).

When news of these atrocities reached the rest of Europe many of the admirers of Peter were greatly shocked at his severity. He was very indignant at their criticisms, and replied: "The honest, industrious and the obedient I will exalt, but the evil-doers I will correct whenever it is necessary. Let malice defame me—my conscience is clear. God is my judge." This strange faith in the righteousness of his actions seemed to support him through everything. Nartoff, a Russian, writing to defend him, says: "Alas—if many could but know what is known to us, they would be astonished at his clemency. If the Imperial archives are ever read, with their secret histories, people would turn pale with horror at the thought of the crimes that were contemplated against this monarch." These archives are now being searched, and the more they are studied the more it becomes evident on what treacherous soil Peter ventured when carrying out his reforms. Everyone round him was complaining, and these murmurs spread from his own family and Court to the outlying parts of Russia. His own son said that his father was surrounded by evil persons, that he was cruel and did not spare human lives, that he desired his father's death, and that the priests had forgiven him for this sinful thought. His sister, the Tsareva Maria, wept bitterly on account of the endless wars—which had lasted twenty years—with Sweden, the constant taxes and the ruin of the people. Yet Petrograd, despite all these troubles, began to grow at a great rate.

Quantities of wine, vodka, beer and tobacco were consumed; *nolens volens*, people resorted to strong liquors to prevent poisoning by the vile fluid miscalled

water, which was too plentiful. Peter's special beverage, cognac and cayenne pepper, possibly saved him from fatal chills, but it played sad havoc with his constitution, for after his death his condition was found to be abnormal, his body being very inflamed. Like the Russian peasant whom I once heard, he preferred "to be burnt up with vodka rather than rot with the water," and of the two evils chose that which appeared the least—for which those who have tasted the water of the Neva will hardly blame him. His unfortunate workmen, who could not afford such luxuries, perished in thousands, and the marshes became sprinkled with the bones of those who died at their labours for the beautiful city.

Other instances of Peter's rigid rule were not lacking. He erected gallows and pillars in the principal squares, on which he could immediately hang anyone who refused to obey his orders or resisted his modern ideas. One of the pillars, with iron spikes on which the heads of criminals—and there were many—used to be impaled, stood in the Troitsk (Trinity) Square. These measures, however, must have been in some degree necessary, for there were many convicts, rogues and doers of evil among the men whom Peter had imported from the interior to help in the work. The pillars were afterwards destroyed by Peter II., the husband of Catherine II. Golckoff, a Russian chronicler, relates that on the day when Mens, the lover of Catherine, Peter's wife, was executed, the Tsar took her for a walk and showed her the head exhibited on one of the pillars. She was not in the least confused, however, on seeing it, and calmly exclaimed that it was "a pity that the vice of the courtiers should reach such limits." Peter must have been very much in love with this clever woman to permit her to flirt with the young Englishman, who, it is said, was the brother of Catherine's lady companion.

Although she was only a peasant girl, the illegitimate daughter of a Swedish officer, she seemed to possess a remarkable power over this man of primitive passions and barbaric instincts. When his wrath was fearful to behold, and nobody else dared approach him, she could soothe the anger of the autocrat's soul effectively.

About this time (1717) Peter and the Empress visited the King of Prussia, and an amusing account of the Tsar, his consort and the strange Court he gathered round him on his travels is found in the *Memoirs of Princess Wilhelmina*, the precocious daughter of King Frederick of Prussia ; it is of peculiar interest and at times borders on the scandalous. " The Tsar, with his consort and suite," she writes, " were on their homeward journey from Holland, when suddenly the Tsarina had a miscarriage, which obliged her to remain at Cleve." As the Tsar did not care to have many people about him, and disliked all ceremonies and formalities, he asked the King's permission to reside in a little summer villa in the environs of Berlin, belonging to the Queen (Sophia of Hanover). It was a beautiful building, fitted up by the Queen with great taste and at considerable expense ; the porcelain gallery was especially fine, and all the rooms were adorned by mirrors ; the house, in fact, was a regular jewel, known by the name of " Mon Bijou." In order to prevent Messieurs les Russes from causing the disorder they had done in previous places where they had lived, the Queen removed all the most costly things.

A few days after the Tsar and his retinue arrived by river. On the shore the royal couple received them, the King helping the Tsarina out of the boat. The Tsar gave the King his hand, exclaiming : " It is pleasant to meet you, brother Frederick ! " He then went to the Queen and was about to embrace her, but she pushed him away. The Empress kissed the

Queen's hand several times, and afterwards was presented to the Duke and Duchess of Mecklenburg. The Queen was also introduced to four hundred ladies who formed the suite—chiefly German young women, serving as ladies of the Court, chambermaids, cooks or laundry-women. Most of them carried a gaudily dressed infant in their arms, and when anyone inquired if the child was hers, the girl curtsied according to the custom and replied : " I have received this child by the favour of the Tsar." As the Queen considered it beneath her dignity to recognise such people, the Tsarina in revenge met the princesses of the blood royal coldly ; in fact the King had great difficulty in persuading her even to pay them a visit.

" This strange Court I saw on the following day, when the Tsar and his consort called upon the Queen, who went out into the ante-chamber of the banqueting-hall to welcome them. Taking the Tsarina's hand, she led her into the audience chamber ; the King and the Tsar followed. As soon as the Tsar caught sight of me "—Princess Wilhelmina at this time was only eight years of age—" he remembered me at once, for he had seen me five years previously ; he took me in his arms and kissed me so much that he almost rubbed the skin off my face. I struggled with all my strength, and boxed his ears again and again, and said that I would not permit such liberties, which disgraced me, but the Tsar Peter only laughed heartily, and afterwards conversed with me for a long time. I had been taught what I should say beforehand, and I spoke about his navy and his victories, with the result that he was delighted, and repeatedly told his wife that he would willingly give up one of his provinces if he could only have such a child as I. The Queen and she each sat in her own *fauteuil* under the canopy, and I stood beside the Queen while the princesses stood opposite.

The Empress was little and fat and of a dark complexion; she was nothing to look at, and behaved badly; you had only to look at her to see that she was of low origin. Judging from her ridiculous apparel you might have taken her for a German comedienne. Her old-fashioned, dirty, silver-bedecked dress must certainly have been bought in an old-clothes shop. Her waist in front was adorned with a double-headed eagle of precious stones; she also wore a dozen orders; round the hem of her petticoat reliques and sacred pictures were attached, which jingled when she walked, so that one might imagine it was a mule trotting. The Tsar, on the contrary, was tall and stately and handsome; but there was something brutal in his countenance which instilled fear. He was dressed as a simple sailor.

"The Tsarina, who spoke German badly, and had great difficulty in understanding the Queen, called her Court fool. This poor creature, a Princess Galitzin, had assumed the post of fool to save her life, for she had been mixed up in a conspiracy against the Tsar, and had been beaten with the knout.

"At last we sat down to the table. The Tsar's place was next to the Queen. As is well known, this monarch in his youth had been well-nigh poisoned; this had so affected his nerves that he subsequently had convulsions, and often could not control himself. While at table he was seized with such grimaces, and brandished his knife so close to the Queen that she became terrified and several times wished to leave. But he begged her to be calm, assuring her that he would do her no injury; yet almost in the same instant he took hold of her hand and grasped it so hard that she screamed. He laughed heartily, and said that she had much finer bones than his Catherine. A ball was to have been held after the dinner, but the Tsar stole away, and walked alone to Mon Bijou.

"On the next day the guests were shown the sights of Berlin, among them a collection of coins and antique statues. One of the latter, I afterwards heard, represented a heathen divinity posed in a very immodest attitude—a rarity, a kind of symbol used by the Romans to adorn bridal chambers. It roused the Tsar's especial admiration, and he ordered the Empress to kiss it; when she objected, he grew very angry, and in broken German exclaimed: 'If you do not obey, I will take your head off!' The Empress was so terrified that she immediately obeyed. He begged the statue from the King, with several others, without any shame, and the King could not say no." (At the same time he took away with him a unique cupboard inlaid with amber, which had cost Frederick an enormous sum—to the sorrow of everyone it was now fated to find a home in Petersburg.)

"Two days after, this barbaric Court departed. The Queen immediately hastened to Mon Bijou; it reminded one of the destruction of Jerusalem. Everything was so spoiled that the whole place had to be restored from top to bottom!"

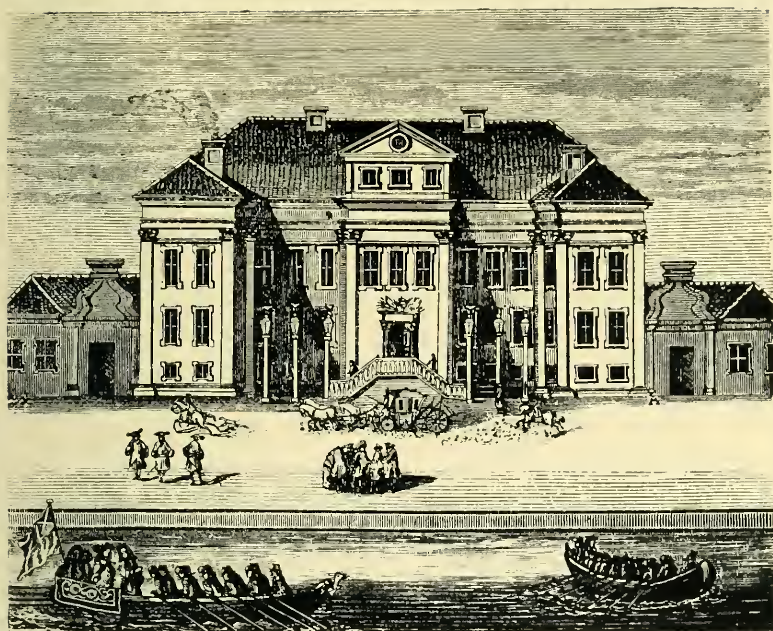
If the reader consults *Evelyn's Diary* he will find that Peter left the house he occupied at Greenwich in a similar state, and chopped a hole through a fine hedge in the grounds in order to reach his work at the shipyards more quickly. His threat to take off Catherine's head was probably no empty one. Had she resisted him, she might have shared the fate of many others who had suffered this penalty for incurring his uncurbed anger.

On his return from Prussia, Peter introduced many German reforms in his army, which increased his unpopularity. To maintain discipline among the soldiers, he arranged in the square of the fortress a wooden horse with a sharp back, on which refractory

soldiers of his Guard were placed; round it pointed stakes were set. Chains fastened the hands of the culprit, who was forced to stand with his feet on the upturned edges. By the aid of this and other diabolical punishments the Tsar managed to control his troops.

While in England on a visit he was much interested in our Parliament and in the speeches he heard there. He remarked to his courtiers: "It is pleasant to listen when the sons of the Fatherland speak to the King the actual truth; this we can learn of the English." On his return he founded the Imperial Senate—probably in the hope of hearing some truth from his councillors and asking their advice on affairs of state, even if he did not always intend to follow it. It was about this time that he instituted his "assemblies," as he called them, which the ladies of the Court, who still clung to the old Muscovite ideas of Oriental seclusion, were obliged to attend. At these receptions they were treated to tea, mead, preserves, chocolates and lemonade, while the men indulged in more potent drinks. Soldiers were sent to bring along any ladies who declined Peter's hospitality, or who despised these Western fashions.

Petrograd was then in such a chaotic condition that it was difficult to find the houses of the various citizens, numbering being non-existent. The streets were so unsafe that they had to be barricaded at night for fear of thieves. At each barrier stood a watchman armed, and, in addition to this, many houses were protected by palisades against the wolves that prowled during the hours of darkness. What with the quagmires, ditches, robbers and frequent floods, it may be imagined that Peter's capital was far from popular with his Muscovite subjects. They regarded Moscow and Kieff as their sacred cities—not this foreign, heretical town built by a sovereign whom all true Russians regarded as Antichrist.



THE OLD WINTER PALACE, WHERE PETER THE GREAT DIED

From an engraving of 1716

Many beautiful buildings came into existence at this period, most of them being the work of French and Italian architects, attracted by the enormous salaries offered. The names of Count Rastrelli the elder, Homan, Forster, Herbl, Van-Svetin, Pemone, Maternov and Trezine are thus associated at this stage with Petrograd, the University or House of the Twelve Colleges being by the last-mentioned designer. Menshikoff, Peter's favourite minister, who began life as a pie-boy, ordered the façade of the college to front the Tsar's house; towards the Neva only four narrow windows looked out. When the Tsar returned from abroad and saw this incongruity he was furious, and, according to his custom, belaboured the back of the "child of his heart," as he termed Menshikoff, with his oaken cudgel, which he invariably carried. A well-known French architect who displeased him is said to have died from one of Peter's beatings.

In 1713 Peter built his Summer Palace near the Fontanka Canal, in a garden which formerly belonged to a Swedish landowner. He was fond of designing, and drew the plans for many houses himself. On the spot where the Hermitage Theatre now stands the Winter Palace was built, and here Peter died, after contracting a severe chill in saving the lives of some drowning sailors.

Thus ended the career of the strange Emperor who did not hesitate to sacrifice thousands of lives for the good, as he supposed, of his country—even his only son. It is not for us to judge harshly this savage genius. As he said when criticised: "Let God be my judge." If Peter did not spare others, he certainly did not spare himself. The evil that men do lives after them. If he did evil in building his city in this unhealthy spot, it will become evident as time advances, but if it was for the good of his people and country the benefits that will be derived from his colossal sacrifices and energy will be his truest justification.

X

STATUES AND MONUMENTS, HISTORICAL MEMORIES AND SOME SPECIAL FEATURES OF THE CAPITAL

STARTING from the Isaac Square, on the left-hand side of the huge statue of the Tsar Nicholas I., the Grand Morskaya is approached—a street only about a quarter of a mile in length, but it contains excellent shops and many fine buildings. It terminates with a beautiful arch, surmounted by a chariot and horses, built on the purest classical lines. This spot has been the scene of sanguinary encounters between the people and the Cossacks. The arch connects the wings of an enormous block which comprises the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Finance and the Imperial Staff. A curious incident once happened to me while standing in the doorway of the building of the Grand Staff chatting with the secretary of the American ambassador. He was an Englishman, and used to collect anecdotes for his chief, which he duly entered in a special book. One of his stories so tickled my fancy that I burst into a hearty laugh, to the immense amusement of the bystanders. People in Russia rarely laugh and sing in the streets as they often do in London. A police officer near by was evidently puzzled, and approached me, inquiring why I behaved so boisterously. I told him that I was enjoying a joke, and added: "Surely it is not forbidden to laugh in Russia?" The policeman, who had a great idea of outward decorum, replied, to my astonishment: "Moshno smejatsja no ne tak gromko" (You may laugh, but not so loudly)! After that little lesson I moderated my expression of amusement when

out of doors, in order not to shock the susceptibilities of the law.

Opposite the archway is the immense granite monument erected to the memory of the Emperor Alexander I., who is said to have died in Siberia as a monk. It is about 100 feet high, and is made from a single block. No other monolith in the world can be compared to this gigantic column, save perhaps Pompey's Pillar. On the top stands a bronze angel, one hand holding a cross, the other pointing to the sky.

On the accession of the Tsar Nicholas the square containing this monument was the scene of a conflict between the adherents of the Grand Duke Constantine and those of Nicholas, who was the younger brother. Part of the Guard was in favour of the Duke, the remainder stood for Nicholas. The soldiers who were in favour of Constantine were told to shout "Konstetootzija!" (A Constitution!)—which they believed to be the name of the Polish wife of the Grand Duke. As soon as Nicholas heard this treasonable outcry he ordered his Guards to fire on the adherents of his brother. They obeyed, with terrible effect—many of the opponents were killed—but they did not understand why they had to shoot. This story, which has a ring of truth about it, was told to me by the adopted daughter of the famous General Diebitch, who captured Constantinople, and who about this time mysteriously died. This old lady taught me what little German I know. She was of Polish and German extraction. The dents made by bullets fired on this occasion in the surrounding houses can still be seen. Many of Constantine's followers, who had become imbued with progressive and liberal ideas during the long campaign against Napoleon, were sent to Siberia; others were executed. Among these was Colonel Pestal, author of a beautiful hymn which some of us used to sing in our childhood, when the unhappy fate of Poland stirred

every heart. One of Tolstoi's novels, *The Decembrists,* commemorates the many brave officers who fell, victims to the wrath of Nicholas, for daring to dream of establishing a constitutional form of government. But these dark days have passed ; the people are wiser and know that "Konstetootzija" is not the name of a woman, but of an ideal form of government which in course of time they hope to attain. In my opinion, however, they would be better suited by a series of republics or grand duchies, based on the model of ancient Novgorod, Pskoff or Tver, under the control of a Grand Duke or President. As yet it seems they are not ready for such a change.

The Emperor Nicholas, who firmly believed in the divine right of kings, has been so long misunderstood in England that I trust the reader will forgive me for stepping aside to give John Maxwell's opinion. Maxwell, who visited Russia in the fifties, and comprehended the " Iron Tsar " more thoroughly than any other writer I have come across, says :

"Nicholas triumphed, but never could forgive or forget this attempt at revolution. A prince by birth and soldier by education, he was accustomed to command and be obeyed; and now he was called to exercise despotic power the slightest check to his authority, the slightest murmur of suspicion, awakened his indignation and called forth all the severity of his character. . . . The fears of political innovations, of new political systems and ideas, are constantly forcing themselves upon him, and to combat these he employs the most extraordinary measures and exhibits the most remarkable energy. The military and naval forces of the Empire surpass in number anything ever seen before his time in days of peace in Europe. Ignorant of the causes of this martial spirit and display, the nations look with apprehension upon the war-

like preparations of the Tsar. The Police, counting its thousands and tens of thousands of public and private, open and secret agents, form another mysterious element of the Government, while suspicions of all kinds rest upon the motives and intrigues of Russian diplomacy in every quarter of the globe. Europe, however, has been deceived as to this important array of the military, constabulary and diplomatic regiments of the autocrat. They are not intended for the final invasion or final subjugation of the nations. On the contrary, they are designed to protect Russia from the attacks of those principles of liberation which seek to penetrate her borders; they are employed to arrest at the threshold those ideas and innovations which could dispute with the despotism of Nicholas. Europe has nothing to fear from the armies of the Emperor of Russia."

Such was the opinion of one of the keenest and most judicial students of Russian history, and it is worth considering attentively.

We all know how Nicholas quarrelled with Louis Napoleon, refusing to recognise him as a brother sovereign, and afterwards with Lord Stratford de Ratcliffe, the English ambassador at Constantinople, who had a personal grudge against the Tsar. The proposal that Russia should occupy Constantinople and take over the protection of the Balkan Christians, and that England should occupy Egypt by way of compensation, was rejected with scorn, and the Crimean War, with all its horrors, was the result. Although that put Russia back fifty years, almost everything Nicholas strove for has been attained: the Balkan Christians have been liberated from the Turkish yoke, Russia's rights and interests in the holy places of Palestine have been respected, while at this very moment her army is preparing to set foot in

the long-coveted city. Whether or no this is for the welfare of the east of Europe is a very important question which cannot be discussed here.

There are other interesting monuments in Petrograd, all with their historical associations—the statue erected by the town to the Tsar Emancipator on the Fontanka, the statue of Alexander III. on the Ochta, in front of the barracks of the Novo-Tcherkask Regiment, the statue of Baron Wylie, favourite physician of Nicholas I., with its inscribed pedestal: "E. V. Wylie (1765-1854), who rendered great service to the medical profession in Russia, and placed medical education on a sound footing." A large hospital, bearing the name of this philanthropic Scotch doctor, stands on the opposite bank, near the Alexander Bridge, and several members of this family still live in the city, Richard Wylie being for some years a well-known member of the British colony. An excellent figure of Gogol, the Dickens of Russia, adorns the Alexander Garden, also one of Kryloff, whose *Fables* are held by some critics to equal those of Æsop. Catherine has her monument in the large garden to the right of the Nevsky Prospekt. She is represented as standing erect, and at her feet her admirers and favourites are grouped—Roumantzoff, Potemkin, Souvoroff, Dashkoff and others. This was set up in 1873, as the inscription tells. We must not omit the fine full-length figure of Admiral Krusenstjerna, on the Vasilii Ostroff. For me this has associations, which need not be detailed, with the name of John Henry Harrison, an old friend of mine who translated several Russian classics into English. He and the late Charles Heath once astonished Nicholas I. by jumping from the Palace Bridge and swimming down-stream for a wager. Thinking that both men had committed suicide, the Emperor sent police to arrest them if found alive. Discovering that it was merely an

escapade, he laughed, and repeated the popular saying to the effect that "all the English are mad!"

A remarkable institution peculiar to Petrograd is the "Addresny Stol" (address table), on the Sadovaja, open almost every day from nine in the morning to eight o'clock P.M. Here the address of almost anybody in the city can be obtained for the moderate outlay of three copecks—a halfpenny. People who have been missing for years, but who are known to be residing in the place, can be found without the least difficulty. Of course this passport and registry system is liable to abuse, but it has many advantages, among them being the facility with which the movements of criminals or suspected persons can be traced all over the Empire. On the other hand, it has drawbacks; it can easily be employed by unscrupulous people for base purposes. For example: I once refused to give the address of a handsome young English girl, a governess, to an inquisitive official whose sudden interest in my countrywoman aroused my suspicions. But, in spite of my curt refusal, he traced her by means of the "Addresny Stol" and the police, who furnished full particulars of her movements from the day she left the city to settle in some distant village.

The town hospitals, I have been informed by medical men, are in some respects the most up-to-date in Europe. These vast buildings are supported by a tax levied on every peasant, working man and woman in the capital—an equitable system of taxation secured by simply affixing a stamp to the passport of every member of the working class once a year, when he or she goes to the police office to have it *visé* or renewed. The expense of the host of officials required to administer, for instance, the English National Insurance Act is thus saved. Had the municipal authorities to support an army of clerks for the collecting and

tabulating of the tax, there would be very little left for the hospitals themselves. There is a difference, in this respect, between the English and Russians. The English are long-suffering, and as long as a thing is "the law" you can do what you will with them—even tax them to their last penny. The Russians are also patient, but they have no respect for the law, and evade it whenever they can. Like the Irish, they are "agin the law," unless it is one made by themselves. In the country, where every little village makes its own, the peasants are exceedingly zealous in carrying out the regulations of the commune; but I cannot say that they care much for the rules promulgated by the *tchenoviks* (officials).

Although the hospitals are so fine and so well managed, the people for whose benefit they mainly exist have a holy terror of using them unless absolutely compelled to. The moujik dreads the hospital just as much as our own poor folk dread the workhouse, but for quite another reason. Ivan Ivanovitch imagines that in these places they "cut up people" (*lude zarjezoot*). Having some vague idea that doctors often perform post-mortem examinations of the body—an action which to him is sacrilege—he believes that they also cut up the living for the sake of making experiments. Rather than enter such an "unclean house" (*netchesty dom*), or undergo the simplest operation, he prefers death, and many in consequence do die sooner than risk these unknown terrors. Notwithstanding these prejudices, there is no doubt that the municipal hospitals of Petrograd are worthy of all praise, and should be visited by those interested in medical science.

In all the town hospitals—the Alexander, Oboocheff, Peter-Paul and St Maria Magdalena—everyone who has paid the tax, which amounts to one rouble (2s. 1d.) a year, is attended free of charge. Persons

who have not paid contribute for the first ten days, R1.72 (3s. 6d.); from ten to twenty days, R3.43 (7s.), and for one month, R5.15 (10s. 3d.). There are several special hospitals, such as those for women, etc., and one is built in memory of Dr Botkin, the late Emperor's physician, whom I once consulted for a broken finger. This eminent surgeon, true to his reputation, wished to amputate it. To this I would not consent, with the result that I saved the finger, which still does good service. The Russian doctors have a world-wide fame. Tarnoffsky, Menshikoff, Botkin and many more earned for themselves a reputation over the whole Continent which speaks well for the future prominence of the country's medical science.

The apothecaries' and chemists' shops are all under the supervision of the Crown, and by experts are said to be unrivalled, both in the quality of drugs supplied and the care taken in making up prescriptions. Each quarter of the city has its own special apothecary, carrying on his business under Government inspection. Should there be any serious complaints, the Imperial privilege, or licence for dispensing, is taken away and bestowed on someone more worthy of confidence.

The chief clubs of the city are: the English Club, the Assembly of the Nobles, the Railway Club, the Commercial, the Pedagogue's, the New, the Merchants' and the "Yacht" Club—the last a very fashionable one, which used to be much frequented by the grand dukes and the wealthiest nobles. Large sums of money were lost and won every night in the big Hunting Club, but whether this gambling still goes on I do not know. Dances, masquerades and suppers are often given. The gaiety begins about ten o'clock and continues until the small hours. Nothing is omitted to make these assemblies enjoyable. The tired guests usually

return between three and four in the morning, but, as the men have not to be at their offices before ten or eleven, this turning of night into day does not greatly interfere with their various vocations. Many of the leisured classes do not get up until midday.

XI

A TRIP UP THE NEVA

THE river may be explored easily by motor boat from the Admiralty works, or by the small ferry steamers that ply up and down during the summer. Ascending the stream, from its mouth, the first object of interest is the Admiralty building yard, where some of the navy's largest cruisers have been constructed. Many a fine vessel, now at the bottom of the ocean, have I seen leave the stocks here. One, the *Hangudd*, I saw launched in the presence of Alexander III. It sank in the Finnish Gulf during heavy gun practice. Owing to faulty construction great fissures appeared in the hull directly the guns were fired, and she foundered. I fear she is not the only Russian battleship to meet an untimely end—not in actual fight, but through errors in design, and also through the peculation which for a long time played sad havoc with the efficiency of the navy. Lower down the river, on the opposite bank, are the Baltic works, near which I first set foot on Russian soil. Here I was introduced to the talented Mr Kaze, the first naval architect to design large armed merchant cruisers which could go almost round the world without coaling. He did not disguise from me that these would be used as commerce destroyers should England and Russia ever come to blows—a contingency which then was continually spoken of. Had it not been for the late Sir Robert Morier this calamity would have befallen without doubt.

As the Gulf is shallow, it was the custom when I lived in the capital to float the men-of-war when ready to the harbour of Cronstadt, where they were fitted with

masts and ordnance; but with the opening of the Marine Canal, that gigantic work contemplated by Peter the Great, this process will become unnecessary. This canal runs from the left shore of the Gulf from the river's mouth for a distance of about eighteen miles. It is about three hundred feet broad and twenty-two feet deep. At the embouchure a dock has been excavated to hold as many as forty large steamers. Here are many huge timber yards, which on the occasions of the frequent fires present a grand spectacle —though not a very pleasant one to the English and Russian shippers. Conflagrations are so prevalent that it is estimated that the whole of Russia's wooden buildings burn down every twenty-five or thirty years.

The beautiful drive of the English Quay comes next. On this are many mansions belonging to the merchants and the nobility. One of the finest is that of the late William Clerk, who amassed a large fortune in commerce. Before reaching "Dom Clerk," as it is called, we pass the façade of the English church, surmounted by a carved angel. This church, which belongs to the famous Russian Company, is outwardly not much to boast of, but the interior, with rich decorations and stained-glass windows, is well worth seeing. Passing the Koopetchsky Club, the favourite resort of business men of various nationalities, and several banks, we arrive at the enormous block occupied by the Holy Synod, which forms the Isaac Square, in the centre of which stands the immense cathedral of that name. Fronting the Neva is the splendid equestrian statue of Peter, by Falconet. Farther on are the Admiralty buildings, where formerly was a yard for the building of Peter's war galleys, also a wharf with ten slips surrounded by walls and bastions like a fortress, probably with the object of resisting the attacks of the Swedes, who had then not given up hope of recovering the Neva and its outlets into the Baltic. The present

The Admiralty with its gilded spire

towering blocks were erected during the reign of Alexander I.

After the Admiralty, whose gilded spire and classical frontage can be seen from most parts of the city, comes the Panaieff Theatre, built by General Panaieff for his handsome daughter. Close by is the palace of the Grand Duke Michael the younger (Count Torby), who, rather than abandon the woman he loved (the Baroness Torby), quitted Russia and relinquished his rank, title and privileges.

Opposite the left wing of the Admiralty is the Winter Palace, facing the fortress of Peter and Paul, and next to this is one end of the Hermitage, separated from the main building by a bridge spanning a canal, not unlike the Bridge of Sighs at Venice. Between the Winter Palace and the marble palace, built by Catherine for Orloff, come a number of mansions occupied by nobles and ambassadors. This part of the quay is called the Dvortzovaja Nabereshnaja, and is perhaps the most expensive quarter of the city as regards rent. On the left, a little past the marble palace (now used by the Grand Duke Constantine, a noted patron of the arts and literature), is the Champ de Mars, at the end of which stands a statue of Souvoroff, whose victories in Poland, Prussia, Italy and Switzerland ranked him as one of the leading soldiers of his age; the figure is quite in tune with the simple and stern character of the man. On its right is the large red block of the English Embassy. Here many of our greatest ambassadors have resided, and upheld the name and fame of their land amid difficulties of which few people have any conception. Those who made the greatest impression on me were Lord Dufferin, Sir Robert Morier and Sir Francis Lascelles; their successors I seldom met either in public or privately. Past this spot, where the fate of England has more than once trembled in the balance, are the

beautiful Summer Gardens. By the entrance facing the river is a votive chapel commemorating the escape of Alexander II. from the bullet of an angry Pole. Like other rulers, this monarch suffered for the misdeeds of his predecessors.

The Fontanka Canal, once the River Fontanka, is now seen, spanned by a short arched bridge; at the end of the embankment is the Alexander Bridge, one of Petrograd's finest; across it lies the Finnish Side, where dwell thousands of workmen employed by the big breweries and factories. From the Finnish railway station, near here, excursions can be made to Ozerke, Lanskaja, Schouvalofva, Pargolova, Terrioki and many other delightful places on the Finnish State Line; also to Wiborg, which for many years was the frontier between Sweden and Finland and Russia. The banks of the river are here flanked by mills and ironworks, the majority facing the stream, which is usually crowded with barges, heavily laden, from the interior via the Mariensky and other canals. This part of Petrograd is known as the Great Ochta, and used to be a healthy district. It has lost much of its beauty through the development of the industrial aspect of the city and the consequent crowding of the population. Here Count Koosheleva Bezborodkina, a man of letters and a favourite of Catherine, had his palace and park. In its glades I have spent many pleasant hours with Matthew Edwardes, a genial, hospitable Irishman, son of the late Colonel Edwardes of Cleethorpe and Grimsby. A considerable portion of the park was purchased by Cæsar Cavos; he bequeathed it to his niece, Camille, who married Matthew Edwardes, my old schoolfellow. Here I often met Lancère, the famous Russian sculptor, also Alexander Benois, a noted painter and cousin of the owner. The exquisite colonnades and fountains that once graced the grounds have disappeared, and only a classical

alcove and a small relic or two attest their former splendour. Opposite this park one gets a sight of the Smolna Monastery. So many of Petrograd's handsome edifices owe their origin to the taste of Italian artists and architects that it might almost be termed an Italian city, from some points of view. Wherever one goes signs of the activity of these descendants of the ancient Greeks and Romans are visible, but unfortunately the stone of which their works are built is perishable, and the peeling surfaces betray the effect of the fogs and winds of the north.

The river here is broad and deep and its current flows strongly. This neighbourhood has seen many boating mishaps, often fatal. Farther on is the Little Ochta, once occupied by the Swedish town and the fortress of Nyshants, which Peter besieged and captured after its defenders had made a gallant resistance against overpowering odds—of no avail, for the Russian troops, encouraged by the presence of the Tsar in person, forced a capitulation. The rest of the journey can be made by the Schlüsselberg steamer, the pier of which is not far away.

I once made a charming excursion up the river with the young Countess Z——, accompanied by the sister of a naval commander who went down with the ill-fated *Petropavlovsk* outside Port Arthur. The day was scorching hot, with hardly a breath of wind stirring, and hundreds of men, women and children lined the banks in a state of nature, cooling at intervals their heated bodies in the cool waters. It was mixed bathing with a vengeance, and I, not being accustomed to such a natural state of affairs, did not know which way to look; but my fair companions did not seem in the least disturbed, and regarded the whole panorama of happy humanity that opened to our view as the most natural thing in the world. I tried to escape into the cabin to hide my embarrassment—for I was

still full of stupid English conventionality. Mentioning my feelings to a Russian officer standing near, he laughed heartily at my insular prejudices, and said I should take no notice. "Are not the Russian lower classes veritable Adam's *kinder*?" he asked. "Adam's children" they are, without a doubt!

Before reaching Schlüsselberg comes the chateau of Prince Potemkin, now desolate and forlorn, as though lamenting the fall of its ambitious owner. This is an excellent spot for a picnic, or the centre of an excursion.

XII

THE FORTRESS OF PETER AND PAUL

THE fortress of the city, a low-lying structure built by Trezine, and one of the oldest landmarks, has ever since its foundation been the scene of tragic events in Russia's history. Here Alexis, Peter's misguided son, was done to death, it is said, by order of his father. In one of the lower cells the lovely Princess Tarakanoffva, Peter's granddaughter, whom I have already mentioned, was imprisoned. Prince Kropotkine and many famous Nihilists have been incarcerated here, but of recent years it has lost its importance as a State prison, for as a rule the more dangerous persons are confined at Schlüsselberg or exiled to Siberia. Although designed and built by Trezine, Peter's leading ministers and advisers—Menshikoff, Narishkin and Troubetskoi—assisted, and in their honour several of the principal bastions received their present names. At first the walls were simply earthworks, but as soon as possible these were faced with granite and brick. The cannon mounted upon them can be fired by electricity.

Situated exactly opposite the Winter Palace, its guns command this and nearly all the palaces on the other shore. During the "blessing of the waters," a ceremony which takes place every Easter, the guns are discharged in celebration. On one of these occasions a "mistake" was made and a ball cartridge was used from a certain point, with the result that a shot fell in the midst of the Imperial procession; a bystander was killed, and the Tsar himself had a narrow escape. Whether this happened by design or

accident I have never discovered, but it was quite likely to have been one of the many Nihilist attempts which disturbed the beginning of the present Tsar's reign.

Schlüsselberg, which is under the department of State Police and the Minister of Justice, is now the Bastille of the Russian Empire; here political offenders are imprisoned by Imperial order, and only set free by Imperial consent. How many are now confined I cannot say; in my capacity of foreign correspondent I was naturally not allowed to inspect such matters too closely. Several professors who taught in the same school as myself were imprisoned, and afterwards deported to Archangel and Vologda, for taking part in the social revolution and supporting a journal called *The Will of the People* (*Narodny Vola*). One of them seemed a most harmless individual, and had become noted by his writings on geology. Both his sisters, who shared his political views, were arrested at the same time, but I believe were soon liberated. A Russian journalist whom I knew very well suffered arrest on suspicion of belonging to the Nihilistic revolutionary party. He, however, was exceedingly well treated by his gaolers, being allowed wine and cigars—most unusual luxuries; possibly, as he was only a suspect, an exception was made in his case. On being set free, my friend was so pleased with his experience that he joined the "Tsarsky Ochran," a body of special secret police whose duty is to protect the Tsar's person whenever he leaves the palace or travels from home.

There are many branches of the Secret Police in Russia. I am informed that in all its members number about 30,000. In time, by dint of close observation, I used to be able to recognise one when I met him—though this was not always possible, for they turn up in most unexpected places and upon all sorts of

occasions. At Domenico's, an Italian restaurant opposite the Kazan cathedral, they often drank tea and read the newspapers, at the same time keeping a sharp eye on students and others who haunted this favourite café.

The Petrograd fortress was built chiefly by Swedish prisoners and Russian workmen, and in some respects is reminiscent of the Kremlin at Moscow, for it contains within its walls the Mausoleum of the Tsars, the Mint and many national treasures. One of these is called "The Grandfather of the Russian Navy"—a boat which was found by Peter in 1691 at a small village near Moscow. On the model of this little craft, I believe, many of Peter's first vessels were constructed at the Admiralty wharves.

There are three gateways, over which the double-headed eagle sprawls in all its magnificence: the Peter Gate (adorned by a leaden eagle over a ton in weight), and the Nevsky and Nekolsk gateways. At the rear is one other, called the Johannoffsky Vorot, after Johann IV., whose tragic end I will allude to later.

One of the most curious duties of the Commandant is the opening of the navigation of the Neva, every year, with a certain fixed ceremonial. He first rows across the river in his galley, delivers a report to the Tsar, and hands to his Majesty a tankard of Neva water—which it is to be hoped he is not rash enough to drink. The Tsar returns the compliment by filling the tankard with good wine, and this part of the ritual we may suppose the Commandant thoroughly appreciates.

The church of the fortress of Petrograd, built by Peter in 1714, raises its fine copper spire 122 feet above the frowning bastions, and is the last resting-place of all the tsars from the time of its founder—the Muscovite rulers who preceded him being, with a few

exceptions, buried within the sacred precincts of the Kremlin. Over each grave of the Romanoff tsars and grand dukes in this Petro-Pavlovsk church is a massive slab of plain marble, surmounted by a golden eagle. They are all extremely simple, as though in death these high-born ones sought the peace which in life was often denied to them. Some of the tombs—there are fifteen emperors and empresses and twenty-two members of the royal family—bear the favourite icons of the departed, or some other significant object. On the grave of Peter the Great, for instance, lies the flag of Kapoodan Pasha, the commander of the Turkish fleet at the battle of Tchesma. This trophy was placed here by Catherine II. as a recognition of Peter's work in founding the Russian fleet. She was his great admirer, and did her best to follow in his footsteps—when it was consistent with her comfort and safety. Other parts of this cathedral are decorated with silver and gold wreaths, formerly deposited on the tombs. Many of them were originally placed on that of the popular but unfortunate Tsar Alexander II., who will always be held in grateful remembrance by the people. The last time I visited this historic edifice I witnessed a touching sight. I saw the Princess Dolgorouki entering, to pray at the grave of the man she loved and worshipped. Many have blamed Alexander II. for marrying the Princess; they forget that she was descended from one of the first Grand Dukes of Moscow, and from Vladimir Monamach, who wedded Guida, the daughter of the brave King Harold of England, killed at Hastings. The Princess came of the old Varangian Dynasty that governed Russia before the Tartar invasions, and long before the Romanoffs—who are said, by the way, to be of either German or Scottish origin.[1]

[1] According to the most trustworthy Russian histories, the Romanoffs are descended from an old German family of merchants, who were called Romanoff after they had been ennobled.

The Fortress Church of
SS. Peter and Paul.

Close to the fortress is the "Cathedral of the Life-giving Trinity," built by Peter in 1703, to commemorate the founding of the city. It was here that the Tsar sang and assisted in the divine service on the anniversary of the battle of Pultava, also on the day of his angel (his name-day) — which all Russians consider as important as their birthday. Near the Troitska Church is the famous "palace," or rather hut, of Peter. In honour of his rank it is dignified with the former name. It is difficult to see in this little house, about sixty-three feet by twenty-one, consisting of only two rooms, a palatial residence for such a monarch; but, as I have said, this man of volcanic passions and sudden impulses loved small apartments and tiny cottages, although he was of goodly stature and a giant in strength. In Cronstadt, at the end of the island, stands an old villa, which I have often visited, which Peter inhabited, and in which he had a sleeping-room of even smaller dimensions than the one in his "palace." During the reign of Catherine the hut was enclosed in a stone casing with a view to its preservation. Nicholas I., in order to show his respect for his great predecessor, constructed a small chapel which contains the miracle-working icon of Peter, which he took with him on all his campaigns. This relic is held in great respect by the people, and on almost any day poor peasants may be seen crossing themselves and praying before it.

The second room was Peter's working cabinet, and the various objects in it—cupboards, chairs, etc.—were all made by his own hands. Near the cottage is a boat, with oars, also made by him. He was not only a skilled carpenter, shipwright and blacksmith, but an expert turner and wood-carver. It is a wonder to all who study his career how he ever found the time to rule his enormous Empire and yet to do all these things so well.

In the immediate neighbourhood of the fortress is the extensive Alexander Park, containing the Zoological Gardens and other places of amusement, but of these resorts, which are crowded with pleasure-seekers in the summer, I must speak in another chapter.

The Fortresses of Schlüsselberg

Schlüsselberg, called by the Swedes Noteburg and by the Novgorodians Oraycha, was taken by Count Sheremeteff from Sweden in the days of Charles XII. For centuries it has been regarded as important, for it commands the Ladoga entrance of the Neva, and the canals. Ever since Prince Kropotkine escaped from the fortress of Peter and Paul, this stronghold has been used for the confinement of "politicals" of note, who are sent here by the Tsar's especial command. It is said that there are dungeons or casemates in the former which only the Tsar, the Chief of Police and the Minister of the Interior have the right to enter. Schlüsselberg, however, is under the direct control of the Minister and the Department of State Police.

This place was the scene of the murder of Johan Antonovitch by the adherents of Catherine, who also murdered her husband at the palace of Ropcha. It is said that this crime was committed by the brothers Orloff and a Count Barjatinsky. I have often seen the spot where Catherine sat when the news was brought to her of her husband's death "from apoplexy." In Russia many eminent men have come to a sudden end through this mysterious complaint, when those in power thought they would be better out of the way.

More than one novelist has described the history of the unhappy Tsar, who was imprisoned by the followers of the Empress Elizabeth, the daughter of Peter the Great. Entirely forgotten by the Empress

and her callous suite, he wasted slowly away in a dark dungeon. Peter III., however, her successor, was desirous of seeing his rival, who had already spent twenty-four years in prison, and, impelled more by curiosity than by pity, ordered the door of the cell to be opened. The strange object thus exposed for the first time for many years to the light of day, "that had once been a man," was so weakened and wasted that one would imagine there could be no possible danger in setting it at liberty. Those who were present on this curious occasion state that the two Emperors for a long time regarded one another fixedly, but what speech they exchanged has not been set on record. No mercy, at any rate, was shown to the unfortunate sufferer; orders were immediately given that the guards should be increased, that his conduct should be minutely watched, and that everything should be at once reported to the Tsar if he showed any signs of liveliness. Three months after this historic event Peter III. himself was assassinated. The prisoner of Schlüsselberg soon followed him into the next world. Two months after an attempt was made by a Polish officer named Merovitch to rescue the unhappy man, whose only crime was that he had a better right to the throne than the usurpers. Merovitch and his soldiers managed to break through, but when they entered the cell they found him lying dead on the floor. All the dangers they had risked in vain, for it transpired afterwards that a standing order existed to the effect that the imprisoned Tsar should be killed directly any rescue was attempted. In 1875 an interesting novel describing this event was published, but at once suppressed. In English, however, there exists a similar novel, founded on the diary of a Scottish officer who witnessed the affair and commemorated Merovitch's unselfish exploit. Russian history is full of such tragedies.

More than once I have walked the broad, dusty streets of Schlüsselberg, but naturally have never been able to see the interior of the dread fortress. How many prisoners it still contains I do not know; they say that even the Commandant himself does not hear the names of those in his keeping—they are only known to the Minister of the Interior.

As a rule these State prisoners never leave the place alive; frequently they go mad through solitary confinement. Political misdemeanants, in Russia generally termed *arrestantes*, except when the country is under martial law (which is more often the case than is supposed), are sent to the governments of Archangel, Vologda, Yakutsk, or to the terrible island of Saghalien, which was inhabited by three thousand murderers of both sexes. C. H. Hames, in a lecture before the Anglo-Russian Society in 1903, stated that he met on this hopeless island "a highly educated lady, who as a girl student was arrested at the time of the assassination of Alexander II. After spending ten years in the dungeons of the Peter and Paul Fortress, she was deported to Saghalien for twenty years." The most desperate criminals of the Empire are sent there, at ordinary times. In Russia the death penalty is seldom inflicted, save for political offences directly against the Government—which in official eyes are unpardonable. Even members of the Duma are not exempt from chains and exile to Siberia, and if the representative of the people can be treated so harshly, what can the ordinary citizen expect? We must remember that Russia is two hundred years behind the rest of Europe. In the days of the Stuarts we treated political offenders just as cruelly, and decapitated a man for an offence which now would hardly be considered worthy of imprisonment.

Life in this exile is rendered more awful by the intense cold, and the absence of any civilising influence

in the bleak, desolate wastes, often a thousand miles from the nearest town or station. Most of these spots have terrible climates, and if a prisoner is not so fortunate as to succumb to the frost and hardship, the monotony and dreariness often drive him insane.

Very few people escape, when once exiled, unless assisted by the settlers, who sometimes sympathise. What with the marshy *tundras*, the dense *taigas* (virgin forests) and their wild wolves, tigers and bears, the biting winds, broad rivers and endless plains, it is almost impossible to escape and live.

In spite of the Department of State Control and its inspectors, who travel up and down the country investigating abuses, it is easy for the officers of a prison to maltreat the men in their charge. In view of the shocking behaviour of certain brutal governors and officials in the distant provinces, the Emperor a few years ago ordered one of his Ministers, General Popoff, to make an inspection of one of the mines where prisoners work in chains, and while there to note how they were treated by the warders. The Tsar's commission also was that a society should be formed to look after the children of persons transported. The most interesting fact connected with this general's duties is that he had to send in his report to Madame Narishkine, lady-in-waiting to the Empress. Had it gone through the hands of officials probably it would never have reached the Tsar. Many documents of this nature get mysteriously lost or delayed in Russia !

The procedure of sending "politicals" and criminals to Siberia, where many of the latter live among the colonists and contaminate these people with their ideas, seems a serious mistake of judgment. As the Siberian colonists become more enlightened and more moral, they will resent the presence of so many desperate characters—just as the settlers in Botany Bay did—and will probably refuse ultimately to suffer

this indignity. The criminal classes should be segregated in Saghalien or some other large island, so that they need not come in contact with the rest of the population. Another island or district should be set apart for "politicals" of the most rabid and unreasonable type, where they might be allowed to carry out their ideals—some of which are, of course, quixotic and impracticable—without upsetting the rest of the community. In this way everyone could be satisfied—even the evil-doers, who could get rid of one another if they wished, and thus be prevented from perpetuating their species.

The last time I visited Schlüsselberg was on a hot summer's day—so hot that there seemed hardly any life in the long, straggling village called courteously a town. Only the boys in the streets seemed alive; they all played at *babkee* with the vertebræ of sheep—a minor sport resembling ninepins. Pigs lay fast asleep by the roadside, and on barges tired men stretched like logs, taking the universal siesta. This midday rest is common throughout the land in the summer months, when the heat and dust are almost tropical. One or two drunken moujiks, singing, wandered aimlessly about, and a few women, unoccupied with household tasks, retailed to each other the latest village gossip, or told of some wonderful miracle, or of the mysterious appearance of the Evil One in some neighbouring hamlet. The few persons I could see thus seemed happy, each in his or her own way—drowsy men, intoxicated peasants, chattering women and even the sleeping pigs and the children. How many of them ever gave a thought to the life of long-drawn-out misery of those deep in the huge fortress just over the water! They did not think; therefore they were happy. Those imprisoned so close by did nothing but think, and therefore suffered terribly. If you would be happy in Russia, it is best not to think overmuch.

XIII

THE MODERN CITY AND THE PEOPLE

Of all the streets in Petrograd the Nevsky is the most important and interesting. It is like the Strand of London in one sense. If you wish to meet a friend, you stroll up and down the Nevsky, and sooner or later you will probably see him doing the same saunter in the broad, animated, pleasant thoroughfare. In the winter, when the merchants and the nobility are in town, this highway is at its best. Officers gallop along the fine " prospekt " at a furious speed that would not be permitted in England; but Russian riders and drivers are expert, invariably surprising strangers with the dexterity of their handling of the spirited steeds—which are frequently stallions. They drive standing upright on the shafts, holding in the three horses they guide like ancient Roman charioteers racing round the arena. Even mere boys are clever drivers, learning the art in their villages almost as soon as they are able to stand alone. The finest carriage horses in Russia are the beautiful black Orloff steeds, which were introduced into Petrograd by the celebrated favourite of Catherine. The majority of the equipages are harnessed in the *troika* fashion—three horses abreast; sometimes four are attached to a sledge, with splendid effect. The Imperial coachmen are generally attired in fine blue or crimson uniforms, richly decorated with gold and silver braid. Before the revolutions the Tsar and Tsarina often drove through the streets with an unusually brilliant turnout, and since the war began the Tsar has regained his popularity, venturing out as of old among his subjects.

In olden times the Emperor Nicholas was frequently seen on the Nevsky coolly smoking a cigar. I have never seen the present Tsar on foot in the main thoroughfares, but have often met the Grand Dukes, although they appeared thus in public at the risk of their lives. When our own King George visited Petrograd he strolled many a time along the Nevsky Prospekt and other streets, to the great surprise of the people, who took him for their own ruler, and could not understand what this sudden publicity meant. That they should make this mistake is not a cause for wonder, when we remember the astonishing resemblance between the two royal cousins. I am told that on one occasion of the Tsar's stay at Windsor the citizens there made a similar error, presenting, with their Mayor, a petition to the Tsar as he walked in the Castle grounds. When the visitor discovered that he had been taken for the King, he was much amused, and no doubt envied our monarch his freedom.

A building to be especially noted on the Nevsky is the Gosteny Dvor, an enormous two-storeyed bazaar containing innumerable shops, in which almost every imaginable fabric or ware can be bought. When I first arrived in Russia most purchases here were preceded by a system of bargaining common to all Oriental lands. You began by offering half the price demanded, and then leaving the shop in apparent disdain. The shopman or his assistant would probably follow you several hundred paces down the bazaar, imploring you to take the goods, as he was selling them at a third of their value for your own sweet sake. After another talk the man, if he thought you were likely to be obdurate, would suddenly haul down the flag by saying that he would let it go at a loss in the hope that you would patronise his establishment on some future occasion. The comedy progressing, he would return with you to the counter, sell you the article at the

Russian Railway Guard: pure Great Russian type

Typical Russian Coachman, stuffed with cushions to look fat and prosperous

reduced figure, and, when you had gone, cross himself before his favourite icon, thanking his patron saint for a profit of twenty or thirty per cent., and praying that some more foolish foreigners (*Njemtzee*) who had no idea of value might be sent his way. In Cracow, I recollect, the process was still more complicated and exciting, for as I passed along the shopping district I was hailed by a dozen pretty Cracovian Jewesses, who ran after me, holding me by the coat-tails, beseeching me not to be hard-hearted, but to buy their goods. As these ladies and the Poles are famous for their beauty of form and feature, I had no objection to their plaints, or even to being called hard-hearted, especially as I knew the accusation was a libel on my character. As the Russians become more Westernised this practice of bargaining is dying out. In many shops one sees the notice "Prix Fixe," which effectively puts an end to all such amusing adventures.

I used at one time to visit the Gosteny Dvor ("Guests' Yard" is the real meaning of the words) every week, in the hope of picking up rare old pictures, silver, coins or drinking vessels. Occasionally a shock-headed Cossack from the Don, having spent all his roubles in cards and vodka, would sell his family treasures—drinking cups dating from the days of Catherine, old French snuff-boxes jewelled with pearls and diamonds, captured from officers and generals of the Grand Army, or similar items of tempting value. Once I was just on the point of securing some of these things, but while I was absent to fetch the needful cash a French lady came and gathered in the plunder—to my immense disappointment, for I had not been long away. On my return, inquiring for the treasures, she joyfully exclaimed: "Plus tard, Monsieur, plus tard!" and remarked that I was not the only one who understood the value of bric-à-brac. She was right. As soon as it became known in London and Berlin that

such lucky finds were to be made in Petrograd the antiquity dealers sent their agents and bought up everything worth having. These agents are now always on the look out, and it seldom happens that a stranger chances on anything of real value. Before the bazaar-keepers became so wise one of my countrymen used to make an income of at least £500 a year by purchasing in this way old pictures, plate and other things at these centres.

It is estimated that the Gosteny Dvor contains about a thousand shops, filled with all kinds of merchandise, and the Alexander Rinok, a resort of the Jews, as many more. Here beautiful lace made by the peasants of the interior may be purchased, linen from Kostroma, Orenburg shawls of lovely design, lacquer-work, the manufacture of which is still a secret, and fine gold and silver enamel-work, believed to have been introduced by the Varangians or taken from Byzantium. Icons, too, of every description are sold. Many of these are exceedingly beautiful, and their hanging lamps make them an ornament fit for any room—though they are put, one thinks, to better use by the devout, whose erring thoughts turn to heavenly things when they look on the representations of Christ and the saints.

This huge bazaar is divided into "Lines," which are named after the class of goods formerly sold in each part—sometimes even now peculiar to each row of shops; thus the row or line opposite the Nevsky Prospekt is called the "Clock Line." That looking toward the Sadovaja (Garden Street) is known as the "Glass" or "Mirror" Line, and so on. This, however, is now chiefly given over to jewellers and their exquisite stocks. It seems that most of these Russian bazaars are arranged in the same manner as were the old bazaars in the days of the Hanseatic League, when from all over Europe the merchants of the Hansa

came to make their purchases at Novgorod the Great, the forerunner of Petrograd and the commercial rival of Moscow. This town was so prosperous that when Ivan the Terrible conquered it he spent many days in destroying the shops, torturing and killing the citizens. Its wealth may be imagined from the fact that in 1478, when the National Council was dissolved, three hundred cartloads of gold, silver and precious stones were conveyed to Moscow. Its population was about 400,000. Pskoff, its sister city, shared the same fate, being almost equally prosperous. The world-famed bazaars of Novgorod and Pskoff are no more; the wealth has gone to other cities; but we can gather an idea of what they were from the busy centres of Petrograd and Moscow. Merchants come from all parts of Europe to buy furs, cloth, precious stones, spices and goods for which the land of Russ has been famous for centuries.

The best time to see the Gosteny Dvor is just before the *prazniks*, or holidays. There are many in Russia, for the people do not believe in too much work —keeping saints' days and "name-days" is far more important, for by due observance of the ordinances of the Church one not only does good to one's soul, but makes sure of an everlasting habitation in the next world. So argues the simple-minded Russian. With all his devotion he does not, as a rule, grow any richer. He observes so many holidays, in fact, that with his poor pay I wonder sometimes that he manages to exist at all. The Christmas holiday is an especially lively time. The whole space in front of the Nevsky is covered with a small forest of fir-trees, from the tiny sapling, a few inches in height, to Christmas trees of the real old-fashioned style. Toys, presents and decorations for these can all be obtained. The peasants of the interior spend a large part of their time in making such trifles. They continue the ancient

handicrafts which in England unfortunately are dying out, owing to the competition of factories, whose articles are neither original in design nor lasting.

At other seasons of the year I have seen peasants bring numberless cages of tiny birds to the town to sell. Aware of the tender spot in every Russian heart for the "little brethren," as they term dumb creatures, they well know that the majority of their customers set the little songsters at liberty directly, regarding it as a sin to treat God's creatures thus. At all holiday times the noise in front of the Gosteny Dvor is deafening; the proprietors spare neither their own voices nor the ears of their customers in extolling their wares and shouting down competitors. The droshky-drivers join in, beseeching you, cap in hand, calling you any title—High-born or General are favourites—by which they think to please, at the same time making disparaging remarks about the horses of their rivals and entering into unnecessary details concerning the sex and qualities of their own steeds in the most natural manner in the world. If this does not secure the desired effect—your valuable patronage—they will give still further particulars, which Englishwomen who chance to hear will happily not understand. If they could, the colour would rush to their cheeks at such unwonted familiarity from that child of nature—the Russian moujik.

Opposite this famous emporium, on the Sadovaja Street, is the Imperial Library, built about the beginning of this century. It contains more than a million books, among them many of priceless value. Enriched by the plunder of old cities, its manuscripts are unique. It has the Codex Sinaticus, one of the very earliest Biblical MSS., discovered by Tischendorff in the monastery of Mount Sinai. Documents throwing much light on the Varangian invasion and colonisation of ancient Russia are also in this collection. With the

increasing knowledge of the Russian tongue it will be made more accessible to foreign nations, who will find in it many records elucidating their own olden customs. It contains the collection of the Polish republic, brought to Petrograd by Souvoroff, who at the same time secured many of the hideous statues now "decorating" the Summer Gardens. A copy of every book printed in Russia is deposited here, in accordance with the regulations of the censors, who make it their especial care to see that the people are not allowed to read any work which they consider might be injurious to the interests of the State or of society. A letter of Jean Jacques Rousseau is one of the rarities, acquired, I believe, by Catherine II. The Koran of Mahomet and the Prayer Book of Mary Stuart, which she used on the scaffold, are two others, though how the latter came here is a problem to me, seeing that this book is claimed to be in the possession of the Fathers of Stonyhurst College, Lancashire, where I saw it with my own eyes in the winter of 1914.

There are other notable collections in the city. Among them may be mentioned the libraries of the Academy of Sciences, the Academy of Arts, the Artillery Museum, the Military-Medical Academy, the Conservatoire of Music, the Naval Museum in the Admiralty buildings, and the Pedagogic Museum. Besides these, various learned societies possess libraries open to the public on certain days.

Many of the treasures of the Imperial Library came from Catherine's famous Hermitage. Maxwell, in his excellent work on Russia, which holds good in most respects at the present time, says: "The MSS. from Persia and every part of Asia are exceedingly valuable and interesting. Some of the Latin writings of the fifth, sixth and seventh centuries are richly illuminated and adorned with arabesques. A Codex containing the four evangelists on purple vellum, in letters

of gold, with marginal notes in silver characters, is said to be the work of the Empress Theodora; this precious document was taken by the Russians during their campaign in Asia Minor in 1829. There is an extraordinary collection of Romances, of the original correspondence and love letters of the kings and queens of France and Scotland, for centuries before the Revolution; these were saved from destruction and purchased for a trifle by Dabroffsky, after the taking of the Bastille, and transferred by him to the Imperial Academy. Among the curiosities of this assortment of royal penmanship is a writing exercise of Louis XIV., copied by him many times; it runs as follows: 'Le Rois font ce qu'ils veulent; il feaut leur obéir!'"

It is said that Ivan the Terrible had a fine library, the contents of which were derived from the various cities he sacked—Novgorod, Tver, Pskoff, Kazan, etc. What has become of the Greek and Roman MSS. that he undoubtedly owned nobody has yet discovered; perhaps some day they will be found in the archives of one of the monasteries or churches he built as expiation for his numberless crimes. The Russians are supposed to have carried away many literary treasures after their occupation of Mukden in the Russo-Japanese War. It was stated in the Press at the time that among these were several Greek and Roman parchments taken by Attila after he sacked Rome and other cities of the Empire. If this report is correct, it is to be hoped that the MSS. will soon be made public.

I have been tempted into a digression from the Nevsky Prospekt, which deserves a chapter to itself. It begins opposite the Admiralty, and continues in an almost unbroken straight line for three miles to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery, the broadest, longest and liveliest highway of the city. It passes through

seven different quarters, and is adorned by the most sumptuous shops and emporiums. The majority of Petrograd's streets are still paved with rough, primitive cobbles, which cause all vehicles to shake and rattle loudly, to the joy of their drivers, who imagine that the more noise and clatter they make the more they are exerting themselves. The Nevsky and the Grand Moskaja, however, are set with neat octagonal wood blocks, forming a smooth and level surface, over which driving or riding is a pleasure.

At one time the Nevsky was the favourite residential quarter for the well-to-do classes, but they have now migrated to more quiet neighbourhoods, for the life of the city is concentrated in and round this fine promenade. In the morning thousands of officials hastening to their posts give it the first signs of activity; about one o'clock, in the lunch-hour, it becomes comparatively silent. Between four and five it wakens for the evening. The officials, after consuming innumerable cigarettes and much tea flavoured with lemon, during the discussion of the latest ballet or the last rubber of "vint," hasten homeward to their dinner. As night approaches, the youth of the town and the ladies of the pavement stroll about—gay young officers, students from the university, clerks from the banks, and a sprinkling of greybeards who ought to know better, throng the pavements. The butterflies, who are the chief cause of this promenading, are not gaily dressed as in England or Germany, nor do they powder and paint; they are noted for their unassuming demeanour and quiet costumes. They never sink to the low level of degradation of the prostitutes of other large Western cities, partly because drink rarely coarsens them, partly because they have always a chance of regaining their lost social position by marriage or by reform. In Russian eyes they are merely "unfortunate," not

"fallen." The teachings of Christ and his compassion to Mary of Magdala are ever in the mind of the true Russian when he is prone to condemn. Thanks to this spirit of sympathy, many a woman of this class is rescued and married by some broadminded or warm-hearted merchant or officer. In most European countries this would, of course, be impossible. On once expressing my surprise to a Russian merchant, he replied: "Why not? What are we men that we should cast a stone at a poor weak woman?" The answer silenced me, for I felt that he was in the right. Although Petrograd cannot be called a moral city, one never sees the street parades that are so terrible, yet so familiar, in London; the excellent police regulations tend to segregate to certain quarters this portion of the population. Owing to the amative nature of the Russian people and the presence of the Guard, numbering 250,000 men, in and around the capital, prostitution is very prevalent. In 1899 about 5000 women were registered as belonging to the unfortunate class, and the number now must be far greater. Probably double the registered number are secretly engaged in prostitution, but escape the vigilance of the authorities. The majority, however, are relegated to the houses of ill fame, for which Petrograd is notorious. These are under the supervision of the police and the medical committees. Were it not so, disease would be rife, for the ignorance and carelessness of consequences of the lower classes is astounding. In Russia it is realised that as long as human beings congregate in cities this evil will never be eradicated; measures are therefore taken to keep it within limits and reduce it to a minimum, thus protecting the more moral section of the population. The prohibition of vodka and the rapid spread of the temperance movement is accomplishing more toward this desirable end than all the laws and regulations can do.

As to other forms of immorality, robbery, swindling and even murder are sadly prevalent, especially in the manufacturing districts of the capital. Manslaughter is common in the Finnish quarter, for the Finns are hot-tempered, revengeful and fond of fighting with their sheath-knives (*pukkies*) whenever the police are absent; they resent an insult and will draw blood for it, when the good-natured moujik would simply get rid of his anger in a torrent of denunciations and oaths —relieving his feelings and harming no one in particular. Not so the Finn, when the wild Turanian temper of his forefathers is roused; the sharp, swift weapon is out in a moment, and so many deaths have resulted from its use that they are now forbidden to carry the knife, under threat of heavy penalties.

Suicide is admittedly frequent in Petrograd, and the number of people who make away with themselves is surprising. Among all classes it is common, and even school-children will destroy themselves sometimes if they fail in an examination. The reasons are often political. Persons suspected by the police, or wishing to escape the wrath of the secret revolutionary committees when failing to carry out some order, will take this way out of their troubles. I shall not easily forget the loss of one of my pupils, a handsome young cadet, who committed suicide because he could not get into the Lyceum, the first educational academy of the country. The youth who can pass with honour the Government examinations often has the prospect of an easy or brilliant future; but as this is impossible without a diploma or distinction in certain preliminary tests, the failure to secure this has marred many a man's entire career.

Crimes of passion are frequent. Young men and women I have known well have sought death when their union has been forbidden by parents, or when their means were insufficient to marry. The tragedy

of Romeo and Juliet is continually being enacted in some portion of the Russian Empire, especially in the south, where the people are more passionate, romantic, poetical and given to moods of alternate elation and despair. About ten years ago, after the collapse of the revolution, there occurred a regular epidemic of suicide in Petrograd and Moscow, and the tendency took many strange forms—swallowing the tops of phosphorous matches, drinking vitriol, or self-immolation after saturating the clothes with petroleum. The commonest practice was for the would-be suicide to throw himself or herself from a lofty bridge into the river, or from a high window to the pavement beneath. The moujik will often look on at these tragedies without attempting to render assistance—an attitude which arises, not from callousness, but from the general feeling that life is of little value, and that if a man falls into the water it is "the will of God" that he should die, therefore it is almost sinful to interfere.

Near the part of the Nevsky which forms the favourite haunts of the gay promenaders the Vladimirsky Prospekt intersects it, deriving its name from the Church of Vladimir, built during the reign of the Empress Elizabeth and finished by Catherine II. After the Nevsky the finest thoroughfare is the Letaynaja Street, so called from the cannon foundries at one end of it. This is flanked by splendid houses and public buildings, and, as it stands on rather high ground, is free from the intermittent inundations which trouble the lower parts. Near here is the Nicholai Railway Station, erected during the reign of Nicholas I., who planned the line connecting Petrograd and Moscow, the old capital. When the engineers showed that monarch their designs for the route, with many curves and twists, he objected strongly, and, taking a ruler, drew a straight pen-line between the two places. "Bwitj po semoo!" (Thus it

shall be !) he said, and the engineers had to follow his instructions, constructing the railway over marshes, morasses and through dense forests. In the end this plan proved the best, and it is possible, thanks to his arbitrary methods, to travel speedily at this day from one city to the other. Odessa and the Caucasus can be reached from this station. Owing to the "zone tariff," fares are absurdly cheap, and the fact that the principal lines are State property also reduces them. But the existence of these extremely low rates is not an unmixed good. The consequent influx of people from the country to the capital has raised the rents of flats to about twice the price they used to be twenty years ago, and food and provisions are proportionately dearer.

I have lived so long in Russia that I resent all the modern hurry and confusion, and the changes in the aspect and very atmosphere of the place. Many of the streets have been widened, and paved with wooden blocks or granite squares instead of the old, primitive cobbles. This does not help the picturesqueness of the city, though naturally an advantage for traffic. Many new churches have sprung up, for the true Orthodox Russian is nothing if not religious, according to his lights. If crossing himself, fasting on special occasions, church-building and praying are ways and means to salvation, he is sure of it. Yet the people are extravagant and reckless, spendthrift by nature, and their hospitality is proverbial. The author of *The Land of the Tsar* writes of this quality as follows:—

"While in Russia visitors are welcomed with a joy as sincere as it is touching, in Germany they never escape a certain formality. Instead of giving him a hearty welcome to homely 'pot luck,' the German host conducts his visitor to the table d'hôte of a restaurant, and if he is admitted to the family mahogany, every care

will be taken to conceal the daily and intimate family habits. In Russia the case is precisely the reverse. The whole family, even the domestics, are gratified by the presence of visitors. All endeavour to make them feel at home; and without causing any change in the ordinary routine of the house they are made to perceive by a thousand little attentions that they are welcome, and could not better repay the kindness shown them than by a speedy repetition of their visit. One must witness the thrill of joy vibrating through every nerve of the household at the near prospect of visitors to conceive the hospitable sentiment of the Russian. With a peculiar sound of satisfaction they say to each other: 'Sevodnja gosti boodut' (There will be visitors to-day)!"

I have lived in almost every country in Europe, but nowhere have I met such kindness to strangers as in Russia. Sweden, perhaps, comes the nearest to it in this respect. In palace, mansion or cottage it was ever the same—the hearty welcome awaited me, and the feeling of being "at home" set one at ease directly.

The Russian is exceedingly fond of his bath, and the heat he can stand is astounding. In Petrograd an excellent hot vapour bath can be obtained for tenpence, for which in London eighteenpence or two shillings would be charged. Many of the public baths in the capital would do credit to Imperial Rome; if not on such a large scale, they are very comfortable, and often luxurious. The attendance is good, and prices are reasonable. The masseurs, or *banchiks*, as they are called, are specially trained for their work, and form an *artel*, or co-operative guild.

The Russians are a most sociable race. In the upper classes the gregarious instinct—and the extravagance of which I wrote—is shown by a constant round of

pleasure. A genuine Russ loves to see a huge concourse of guests round him—the more the merrier. Whether he can afford it or not does not matter; if he is likely to end in the bankruptcy court it is a minor consideration. Whatever happens, he will have had a good time, and that is the main thing in his opinion. If you glance at any newspaper—the *Novoe Vremya*, for instance—you will be astonished at the number of fine estates for sale in the interior, or mortgaged owing to their owners' recklessness in pleasure-taking.

With all this geniality goes a certain unreliability in the character of the people; they are prone to yield to sudden impulses or to unexpected temptations. As a rule they trust neither themselves nor other people, not so much from intent to deceive as from inherent weakness. One of my pupils used to amuse me by always paying for his lessons in advance. When I remonstrated, saying that I fully trusted him, he replied with a laugh: "I know you do; but I do not trust myself!" "How's that?" I asked. "Well," he answered, "after leaving you to-night, I might meet one of my companions and spend the money. It would then be gone. Is it not far better to pay you now rather than run the risk?" I could not help smiling at his frankness and his method, for the reply was so typically Russian.

If the folk are not saints, they are seldom hypocrites. I came across only one real hypocrite, but he was so transparent that he was not at all dangerous. Whenever I met this queer character he was on the point of going to pray before the Kazan Mother of God, or the image of the holy St Nicholas. This ruse greatly impressed his simple peasant customers, who were lost in awe at the sight of such a God-fearing man, but his saintliness did not move me to the least admiration—I had met many whose methods were far more cunning, though they hardly came under the name of hypocrite.

Prince Valerian Galitzin, discussing the appearance and effect of the capital during the summer months, writes rather depressingly:

"The heat, dust, and smell! Petersburg is horrible in the summer. The shops exhale the smell of sour cabbage, and from the houses that are being built comes the smell of damp and of lavatories. Masons are at work, and there is dirt. The *lomovie* (carters) are carrying iron hoops, making a deafening din. From the scaffolding round the houses drop white lime and chalk, and the blue sky is like melted copper. One wanders about the streets as if in a dream. Sometimes I gasp for breath, and do not know where I am going or from whence I am coming. My head whirls, my legs shake, and I almost fall. I have just seen a drunken painter hanging in a basket at the end of a rope, busily painting a wall and singing some merry ditty; whenever he lets the basket down it rocks, and he spins round and round as if he were dancing. I look at him and laugh so heartily that the pedestrians gaze at me in surprise; in truth, I almost laugh myself into a white fever."

Petrograd in July, its streets up, its drains open, its miles of stucco walls undergoing the process of being replastered and "whitewashed" in red, white, blue, green, according to the fancy of the owners, is not easily forgotten. The heat and humidity cause the stucco to peel off in large flakes and patches, and the result is very unsightly; but after the thousands of masons, painters and plasterers have done their work, the dilapidated aspect of the city is cured; once more rejuvenated and rendered respectable, it begins to look really superb.

While this annual clean-up is in progress, all who have the means leave the place, recuperating their

strength among the pine forests and lakes of Finland, and preparing for the gaieties of the long and trying winter. Some go to Oranienbaum, Peterhoff, Strelma and other beautiful spots on the Russian side of the Gulf, or retire to their estates in the interior. Wherever they go, however, the heat is almost intolerable. For those who cannot get away the outlook is bad. Sickness is rife, and many die from fevers caused by impure air and still more impure water. At the end of the summer the poor workers who have stayed in the dusty squares and streets are as pale as parchment.

The last time I was in Petrograd, in order to escape the smells and the stifling heat, I took a trip in one of the small steamers that ply up and down the Fontanka Canal, intending also to visit an old friend, a general who had served three emperors in the capacity of adjutant. To my great regret I found he was no more; he and his stories of Court life had gone for ever. This serious loss reminded me that the Petrogradians are not a long-lived community. A few years ago, notwithstanding all the efforts that had been made to render the city healthy, the birth-rate and the death-rate were equal.

Moscow in summer is hardly any better than Petrograd, although it is built, like ancient Rome, on seven hills. The primitive sanitary arrangements make it very unhealthy, and its mortality sometimes rises to fifty per thousand.

In the evenings of July and August, when the heat reaches its climax, the pleasure gardens are thronged, and the splendid military bands of the regiments of the Guards, stationed in and round the capital, play for the entertainment of the people. One of these, the finest I ever heard, was at the Krestoffsky Gardens. The musicians were Lesgians from the Caucasus, an exceedingly musical race, and they wore their neat, close-fitting native costumes, which are both practical

and effective. All who cannot spare the time to drive through the environs, or to visit the islands at the delta, frequent the Summer Gardens. Here they indulge in a mild form of excitement called *gooljanee* (not entirely unknown to Londoners), which consists in parading up and down for an astonishing number of times and staring at one another with the most unblushing curiosity. From what I have seen, Russian women do not resent this scrutiny; they accept it as a compliment, and as proof that their coquetry or their charms have attracted attention. The Summer Gardens, containing some almost indecent statues brought by Souvoroff from Warsaw as a present for Catherine II., are a favourite haunt of young lovers. In former times, I am told, couples became acquainted by means of a *svacha*—a kind of go-between, generally an old dame, who not only introduced the two desirous ones, but subsequently, if matters went well, arranged with the parents of the "parties" the terms of a marriage. But I believe this custom, with many other quaint practices, is now dying out.

XIV

THE POLICE OF PETROGRAD

THE Prefect of Petrograd during a recent period of unrest was General Clayhills, a handsome, portly man, descended from a Scottish family long settled in Riga. Seldom does an Englishman or a Frenchman become a Russian subject; but when Peter the Great annexed the Baltic Provinces, with their sprinkling of Scottish soldiers of fortune, many of these were forced to change their nationality, and others followed in the reign of Catherine. The Russian people have a peculiar facility in absorbing foreign elements. Many Germans, Scotch, Italians and other aliens have in two or three generations become quite Russian in thought and language. Yet I have known English families, settled in the cities for over a hundred years, as thoroughly English in sentiment as their friends at home.

General Gresser, perhaps a more interesting figure than Clayhills, was another Chief, a typical bureaucrat and a Prussian type, straight as an arrow, tall, wiry, with a commanding address. For a long time he was practically Dictator of Petrograd and the terror of the working classes. At a word from him almost anyone whom he considered obnoxious or dangerous had to leave the city; few nobles, officials or merchants did not fear him. Once, when he interfered with the grand dukes and their amusements—which happened to shock his German susceptibilities—the old martinet suffered a severe rap on the knuckles, which he never forgot. It was left to the celebrated clown, Vladimir Duroff, of the Circus Cincinelli, to "take a rise" out of the energetic Gresser; true, by doing so he got into

very hot water himself. Duroff was exhibiting his famous performing pigs, and made the audience roar with laughter by a stinging pun on the Chief's name, asserting that one of his pigs was called " gross " and the other " gresser " (greater). The people, who at once saw the point, were immensely pleased, but Gresser was not; he had the clown imprisoned and expelled from Petrograd. On his arrival at the German frontier Duroff again got into trouble. He sent a telegram to some friend in Berlin which reflected on the Kaiser. The German police, who have little or no idea of a joke, resented this as an insult, and the poor comedian once again was placed under arrest. What happened to him after this I do not know; but probably he became more careful in this hobby of poking fun at important persons with a touchy disposition.

Another notable police master was General Trepoff, under whose rule the terrible Sunday riots took place. Trepoff, who was a regular soldier, was in no way responsible for this catastrophe, and raised a large sum of money, from which relatives of the victims were assisted. The late Grand Duke Sergius, who died within the walls of the Kremlin at the hands of an assassin, is said to have given orders to fire on the demonstrators—rioters they could not be termed by anyone with the least respect for truth and justice.

Both Gresser and Trepoff died most mysteriously, and many people believe that they were poisoned. It was said that Gresser's life was cut short by a potion administered by a quack doctor. But Petrograd is always full of similar rumours, and it is extremely difficult to arrive at the truth of such matters, so curious is the state of society there. It is usually the priests, the secret police and the officials who terrorise people, not the nobles, who for the most part are enlightened and educated men, travelled, and versed in many languages. They, however, are in the

minority, and as long as Russia is blessed with several hundred thousand priests and a whole army of secret police it will hardly adopt Western ideals, even though Tsar and Grand Dukes may desire it. "The conservative spirit is very strong in Dahomey," said a negro from that land to a middy who reproached him for his country's custom of human torture and sacrifice. We may say the same of "holy" Russia, where all reforms must be introduced with extreme circumspection. Men of the type of Peter, who could with a cudgel administer corporal punishment, or act as his own executioner, are not born every day; but there are occasions when they are needed, to keep in check characters even more unscrupulous and dangerous than themselves if given a free hand.

Trepoff was the son of the famous General of that name, shot by Vera Sasulitch for beating a political prisoner contrary to the law. He was seriously wounded, and would have died had it not been for the skill of Dr Duncan, of the Petrograd police. This eccentric man, who received the title of General for his services, extracted the bullet and saved Trepoff's life. The criminal, after many dangers, escaped to Switzerland, where I believe she died in exile.

Trepoff was a foundling, like many eminent Russians, and is said to have obtained his name from a German word meaning "a step." He was found on a step, and was taken to one of the Government homes, reared, educated and placed in a position to earn an honest livelihood. In Russia no great stigma attaches to illegitimacy; it is rightly and justly considered that the shortcomings of the parents should not be visited on the innocent children. The Government takes great care of children born thus, and thanks to this humane spirit many a soldier, artist or actor has been saved for the good of the State who in moral England might have perished or gone to the bad

irretrievably. If the child is a girl, she is equally well looked after, taught to become a capable and useful servant, cook or dressmaker—in fact to earn an honest living instead of being sent to the dogs by members of an outraged community.

On the whole, the order maintained by the police of the capital is excellent, and I should say that the streets are really safer than those of London, by night or day. The arrangement of the houses, which are built round a large courtyard with only one entrance facing the street, makes it easy for the police to watch and control suspicious persons. At the entrance of every house is the *dvormik* (porter), whose duty it is to notice all who go in. Porters are also stationed before the doorways leading to the flats in which the majority of the middle classes dwell. These men are bound under heavy penalties to furnish all details demanded by the police concerning the doings of every person living there. Thus it is difficult for rowdy or suspicious elements to enjoy the licence they have in England, though it must be admitted that in Russia the extra power granted to the police is sometimes abused. This abuse, however, is usually by the gendarmes and secret police, who are not responsible to the municipal authority for their actions. As a rule, I have found the Russian municipal police exceedingly reliable men, very courteous and willing to oblige the stranger in distress, even when the stimulant of a tip is not in prospect. Since Gresser and other chiefs instituted the practice of nominating only good-conduct soldiers to the position of policemen and sergeants, the Petrograd force has much improved in every way, and is incomparably superior to the local police, of whom I could relate many amusing anecdotes did space permit.

Whatever we may think of the political ideals and methods of the Russian police, we cannot help admir-

ing their bravery and contempt of death. Time after time they faced certain death in their attempts to track down desperate revolutionists and Nihilists. An idea of this may be gained from the following paragraph from a Russian paper:—"In a single fortnight in February these deeds of violence were committed by terrorists: Twelve high officials were murdered, twenty-one wounded; sixty-one private citizens were attacked for political reasons, forty of whom were killed and the remaining twenty-one wounded; State property to the value of half-a-million was seized by the revolutionists." Such was the condition of affairs the police had to cope with for several years.

As a rule the police of the suburbs and the interior are neither so efficient nor so trustworthy as those of the capital. Among them are still to be found such types as Gogol's Stepan Iljitch Oochovertoff and his subordinates. The play in which these are leading characters so pleased the Tsar Nicholas that he ordered it to be played every year in the Imperial theatres, and the author was taken under his especial protection. This did not save Gogol, however, from the wrath and spite of the corrupt officials, who, angered at being thus satirised, gave him no peace during his brief and chequered lifetime. That such types still exist in the provinces there is not the least doubt, and only the vigilance of the Department of State Control, which sends its inspectors up and down the land continually, prevents many abuses in this body, which practically rules Russia. The revelations of Nicholas Burtzeff, who was arrested and imprisoned on his return to Russia, gave an insight into their questionable methods, as well as a glimpse of the deliberate murder of the honest but severe Stolypin—who, it appears, was done to death by the police when they feared he would punish them for their corruption. One of the most flagrant cases, the Shitormir scandal,

occurred while I was in Petrograd. It transpired that the Chief of Police was actually in league with the Chief of the Fire Brigade, with the object of setting houses on fire and claiming the insurance money. On being found out, the Chief of the Fire Brigade and his wife committed suicide; but I fear there are still many such sinners in "holy" Russia. Perhaps the principal reason for this criminality is that such wretched salaries are paid that it is almost impossible for men to live honestly on their proper earnings. The more truthful are quite outspoken on this theme, plainly intimating that they expect presents (*podarkee*) from those they protect, as it is impossible for them to exist on their pay. As a rule I have found the so-called exactions of the police not extravagant or unreasonable, considering the huge fortunes foreign manufacturers and merchants make in Russia. Generally speaking, they do not touch aliens or British subjects unless revolutionary or socialistic propaganda is suspected. Occasionally they make mistakes. Once one of my friends, an English farmer, disappeared on the outskirts of the city in the evening; a sack was suddenly thrown over his head, while two other men bound him so tightly that he could make no resistance. His captors, after keeping him in a cell for several weeks, discovered that they had caught the wrong man, but, fearing to set him free so near the capital —knowing that the British authorities would make things very unpleasant for them—they took him across the frontier to a small Prussian town and allowed him to find his way home as best he could. No difficulty arose over spiriting the poor man away, for prior to the war the Russian and Prussian police used to work hand in hand and oblige one another by often giving up fugitives or revolutionaries.

It is something to be thankful for when I am able to say that during my long residence in Russia,

engaged in a trying and unpopular profession, I never had cause to complain of the attentions of the police. This was because I refrained from interfering in the internal affairs of the country whose hospitality I enjoyed, and stuck strictly to my own business of foreign correspondent. Had I been so unwise as to show any interest in Nihilism, this little work would never have been written, for I was keenly watched—the police strongly object to all gentlemen of the Press and tolerated our presence unwillingly. Their most dangerous assistants are the beautiful women employed to wheedle secrets out of unsuspecting and impressionable young men, and thus lure them into trouble. Once I almost fell into the clutches of one of these sirens, owing to my love of music. I was invited by a young, handsome lady of German extraction to sing some of the melodies for which Russia is famous. My pleasure, however, came to an abrupt end when my companion, a Petrograd Englishwoman, whispered to me to be cautious, as our fair hostess was in the pay of the secret police, while her two brothers and the officer with whom I had just been playing cards were all *sitch-ke* (agents-provocateurs) whose chief duty was to frequent the cafés, entice guileless students, and then have them arrested.

The Government has spent millions of roubles in crushing revolutions by such means, but after the war I fear they will break out with renewed violence.

XV

OFFICIALDOM IN RUSSIA

EVERY Government man is more or less afflicted by red tape, but the Russian probably takes the palm in this respect. It is said that Peter the Great copied the Chinese "table of ranks" in creating his army of officials, which is still the bane of the country. There are hundreds who think more about their possible decorations than about the welfare of the land, and these, with the police, practically rule, rather than the Duma, the Council, or the Cabinet of Ministers. They are the mandarins of Europe, comparable in many things to their Chinese prototypes. They seem to live on red tape and sealing-wax, and to be part of a huge machine, devoid of sense, sentiment and often of intelligence; to them the only point of importance is to do everything according to rule, whether the country suffers or not by their hide-bound prejudices. During the great famine, for instance, I remember that the officials declared that there was no famine, only "a failure of the crops." Thousands perished, but it did not matter, so long as their reports were not contradicted. In the capital, and in Moscow, where Western ideas have become prevalent, there are many enlightened and even honest men among this class, but in the interior, where Tartar and Oriental notions still obtain, the olden type depicted by Gogol is often found.

There are, of course, ways of circumventing these authorities. One of my friends, a railway engineer, did not even consult them; he simply went on with his railways and bridges as if they did not exist,

knowing well from experience that it might take years to obtain permission from headquarters to carry out any important work. So many petitions had to be sent in, so many documents had to be stamped and sealed, before the appeal finally reached the proper person, that he quietly completed his work and said nothing. The Government Revisor — for a consideration—took no notice, and never mentioned the matter in his reports ; only when it was all over would he recognise its existence. Then a few awkward questions were asked, and a few wheels had to be greased ; but the method was generally attended with success. There are many mysteries in Russia, but the ways of the official world supply one of the most puzzling. Yet, with all their failings, the result of the system and not of the men, the Russian official is slowly improving, thanks to foreign influence and the advance of Western ideas. One may be thankful for small mercies, for in truth there is much room for improvement, as Sir Mackenzie Wallace shows in his excellent chapter on this subject.

One man I used to visit, occupying a minor post in the Government, frequently, for a small consideration, supplied me with valuable information for the Press. By way of supplementing his wretched salary, he acted as intermediary for German, French, English and American subjects, whenever they wished to become Russianised, or to obtain permission to build factories or business houses. When I first met him he was in reduced circumstances, and could hardly support himself and his family, but when I left Petrograd he was flourishing, and rushing about the city in his own motor car. His enormous income was simply made by obtaining concessions and privileges for foreign merchants, who paid him large sums for favours of this kind. He would sometimes receive as much as £3000 for obtaining permission to erect a

mill, or for getting the tariff lowered on certain lines over which the applicant's goods had to pass. I introduced to him several merchants who had wasted thousands of pounds in the endeavour to gain a footing. He knew exactly which officials were hard up and could be bribed with impunity. In every department there are men, however—nobles or country gentlemen—who will not stoop to this, and with these obstacles concession-hunters come into conflict when they do not know the ropes. My friend knew every man in his department whose influence was necessary, and was often able to secure in a few weeks or months privileges which others, who did not know the methods, might not have gained for years of wasted time. This prosperity, however, did not last. The old proverb, "Lightly come, lightly go," held good, and before long my smart friend was as poor as ever.

An interesting person I often met was Colonel L., attached to the Finance Department. He was a learned man, and a great admirer of Charles Dickens, whom he compared, as do many critics, to Gogol. For wit, humour and pathos, perhaps Gogol was above Dickens, but he burnt a good deal of his literary work owing to his worries and the persecution he suffered at the hands of those he stung by his satires. Nicholas, honest but despotic, was so pleased with Gogol's *Revisor* and *Dead Souls* that he took the author under his protection, sending him to Italy to recover his health. In the house of Colonel L. we had many discussions on literary matters, also on other affairs, for I remember on one occasion we began a heated argument concerning England's Free Trade and Russia's policy of Protection. I caused some consternation, believing in "Fair Trade" or a policy of reciprocity, by stating that we might some day place a duty on Russian wheat and agricultural produce, in favour of our own colonies, as soon as they were able to meet our

requirements, in case Russia did not soon reduce the high protective tariff on our manufactured and other goods.

My friend's wife, like himself, spoke English. She was not only a first-class housekeeper, but was also able to prepare a dinner which would have done credit to a French chef. She could converse on any subject, and with all these accomplishments was not in the least a " blue stocking."

If my official acquaintances were badly paid, they could not as a rule complain that they were overworked. Tea-drinking, cigarette-smoking and the retailing of the gossip of the city seemed to account for a considerable portion of their time, and the amours and other delinquencies of the wives of other men formed a frequent topic. Card-playing also occupied much time. Foreign politics were eagerly discussed. One man I knew was obsessed with two ideas : that the English would some day bombard Cronstadt, and that the Finns would rise and march on Petrograd when nobody expected it. Others constantly feared a German invasion of the Baltic Provinces, the inhabitants of which, owing to the Russianising policy of Pobjedonodtzeff, the Grand Duke Sergius, Ploeve and other reactionaries, were none too loyal.

It is due to the system of officialism, which cannot easily be eradicated, that Russia in time of peace or war is never as strong as she might be, had she no immense army of impecunious persons attached to the Government in one way or another. More than one has told me that it is quite impossible for him to live on his salary, and openly admitted that the taking of bribes was the only means by which his poor wage could be reinforced.

The Tsar Nicholas used to say that were his teeth loose they would be stolen out of his mouth! He endeavoured to remedy the prevalent corruption by

the most drastic means. It is said that he once struck an official dead who attempted to deceive him, and, as he was a man of enormous strength and violent temper, quite possibly this may be true. One of his trusted favourites, with whose assistance he tried to improve the state of affairs, was Count Peroffsky, Minister of the Interior, whose son I knew intimately. The following anecdote, which has probably never been heard in England, throws much light on the character of this Tsar and on the condition of Russia during his reign.

One day the Count was plunged deep in thought after an interview with the Tsar; his musings were not of the brightest, for to be Minister under Nicholas I. was no sinecure. "There must be order in affairs," the Emperor had said, "and you must make yourself thoroughly at home in the course of events. First of all, you must introduce order among the police; all Petersburg is aware that the greatest rascals are to be found in their ranks. Let me soon know that this state of things has been remedied."

The Minister heaved a deep sigh. Every child knew that the police took bribes, but old peccadilloes could not be dragged up; besides, proofs were needed. Where on earth could he obtain proofs against the police?

Colonel Baratoff, his cousin, a merry young *bon-vivant*, entered the room. He evidently wished to congratulate the Minister on his new position, and, if possible, to derive some material advantage from his visit, for he was always in want of money.

"I have the honour!" he exclaimed. "You are now a powerful man——"

"Yes—and may require friends, good, reliable friends, who can give me their support," replied the Minister. "I was just thinking of you; you are a bold fellow, and can do me a service." He then confided to the young man what lay on his mind.

"Splendid!" cried Baratoff. "To set a trap for the police is just in my line. I will arrange it this very evening. To-morrow you shall expel at least half-a-dozen police officers, as sure as my name is Baratoff!"

A long private consultation ensued, and Baratoff retired. An hour after the Chief of Police was ushered into the presence of the Minister.

"I have summoned you here," said Peroffsky, "on very important business. I have heard from a dependable source that there is a gaming club on the Nevsky Prospekt, where faro and other games of chance are played for enormous sums. These people ought to be arrested this very day!"

"My Commissioner and some officers," answered the Chief, bowing, "will even to-day arrest the offenders."

That same evening an intimate little company sat round a green table in a building near the Nevsky. On the table were heaps of silver, gold and notes. Suddenly a noise was heard in the corridor; a harsh voice called: "Open, in the name of the law!" Before any of the gamblers could reach the door, it burst open, and six policemen rushed in. The players jumped up, horrified, while the Commissioner took the money and put it in his pockets. Then, turning to the company, he requested them to follow him to the station.

"But is écarté a forbidden game?" asked one.

"No, écarté is not forbidden," said the Commissioner; "but people do not play écarté for such large sums."

"Large sums? No, Mr Commissioner—you have seized only eight hundred or at the very most one thousand roubles!"

The Commissioner looked nonplussed, but a light flashed across his brain. The amount was at least twelve thousand roubles. For a moment a struggle

went on within him, then, with a meaning glance at his comrades, he said :

"Well—if it was not more than that——"

The next day the Commissioner called on Peroffsky and gave a detailed account of the operation.

"How much did you seize ?" asked the Minister.

"About eight hundred and sixty roubles, your Excellency."

"You lie, you scoundrel!" shouted Peroffsky. Opening a door, he showed the Commissioner the company of card-players, among whom was young Baratoff.

On that day the Minister had an audience with the Tsar, and related his fortunate manœuvre.

"Good," exclaimed the Tsar. "Was it Colonel Baratoff who helped you ?"

"Yes, your Majesty."

"Then we will make him Chief of the Police."

"Baratoff!" ejaculated Peroffsky, astounded.

Nicholas gave him a questioning glance. "I perceive," he said, "you do not believe in Baratoff's honesty. Good. Then we will find another." He paced to and fro, presently standing in front of his Minister.

"Do you know, Peroffsky," he said, with a certain contempt in his tone, "I believe there is only one honest man in Petersburg."

The Minister bowed, highly flattered.

"Understand me rightly, Peroffsky," rejoined the Tsar. "I mean—myself!"

This story may be partly invention, but anyone who knows the methods of the Russian police, and the revelations of Burzeff (who since his return to Russia has been arrested and imprisoned), can but admit, *si non e vero, e ben trovato.*

Count Peroffsky's son, a man of the strictest integrity, was a General and Courier of the Tsar in

Siberia, and one of those fine types which Nicholas loved to attach to his retinue. In later years he was placed in charge of one of the Emperor's farms. He married a beautiful woman of Berlin, and brought up a large family, which he ruled with patriarchal severity; his will was law, and no one dared oppose his wishes. In spite of this, he was well loved, for he had qualities which compensated for his austere aspects. He was handsome, honest, daring, a typical official, in fact, of the old regime of Nicholas.

The card-playing to which I have alluded is almost a passion. The officials, who are rarely overworked, discuss the feats of the previous evening's play with the greatest gravity. I have seen merchants on the Exchange commenting on their last game before proceeding to business subjects. With many the intricacies of " vint " seem of far more importance than the tenets of their religion—revoking, or inattention to the game, is a most serious offence, punishable, one would think, with decapitation! In 1875, 110 tons' weight of playing cards were conveyed into the interior by the Moscow-Petersburg Railway, and the quantity now is immensely larger. All these card packs are made by the Government, and the proceeds from their sale, which reach a very big sum, go towards the support of various charitable institutions, such as orphanages, etc., under the supervision of the Crown.

On my last visit to Petrograd I met a Russian official whose acquaintance I made on the steamer that conveyed us from Hull to Cronstadt. Of peasant origin, like so many gifted men in the Russian Empire, he yet was one of the best-read men I have ever known in any country. He had travelled almost all over the world and had collected an immense library of books in various languages. During his stay in England he had come to the conclusion that if Russia and England did not soon become friends it would be so much the

worse for both of them. In his opinion Russia had everything that England required in the way of raw products, while England possessed all that Russia most needed—capital, enterprise and experience in the arts and sciences. He held that it was a great misfortune for both countries that they could not finally settle their various differences in Asia and become firm allies. Both, he added, had the same enemy, Germany, and both were concerned at the growing power of that progressive, active neighbour. Russia did not fear England so much. The worst England could do if she attacked Russia was to destroy the coast towns and fortresses, some of which she might annihilate. This would not matter, for she could never land troops in sufficient numbers to inflict material damage. Russia had, it must be remembered, 6,000,000 men trained and armed, with about 4,000,000 Landsturm (Opolchina), many of whom were excellent soldiers. Of these immense military resources only a comparatively small part could be used in the Russo-Japanese War, because of the enormous distance—about 6000 miles—of the field of operations from the main base. The necessity of keeping the best men in the country to guard the German and Austrian frontiers and to repress the revolutionists also hampered Russia seriously in that conflict.

As to her natural resources, her wealth was beyond belief. Annually from £20,000,000 to £30,000,000 sterling in gold was obtained from the mines and washings of Siberia; but only about a third of this amount found its way to the Crown; the rest was stolen by officials and miners, who illegally sold it to the Chinese. But people cannot live on gold. Far more important than this were the vast plains and steppes, with their millions of acres of virgin soil, the primeval forests stretching for hundreds of miles without a break. Unfortunately the Russian people

are too torpid and backward to make use of this unbounded store, or to earn one-tenth of what the English, Germans or Belgians would derive from it. If Russia could but have more English capital, workmen and men of commercial enterprise, both Empires would benefit enormously. "She does not want India," continued my friend, who had visited the East. All she required was more outlets to the oceans of the world. And why should there be any strife between the two countries when she did not covet an inch of our territory? The stupid talk about "marching on India" originated with that irrepressible soldier, Skobeleff, who was purely a military man, and no statesman. The reason why Russian militarists broached this scheme was because India was the only vulnerable spot where pressure could be exercised on England when she was continually opposing what Russia held to be vital interests. If the two Empires could but come to a lasting arrangement in Asia and defend their respective spheres of influence, there would be no need whatever to maintain the large armies or to be perpetually at loggerheads with one another.

As to Japan, this official said that our alliance with that purely Asiatic power was one of the greatest mistakes ever made by English statesmen, as future events would show, for the brilliant successes of Japan had stirred into activity the slumbering races of that huge continent, and the results would in the end be disaster for the Western nations.

XVI

THE MOUJIKS AND WORKING CLASSES

It must not be forgotten that Petrograd, besides being a great port, is also an important manufacturing city. Various kinds of industrial undertakings employ about a third of the population; more than 100,000 persons are engaged in trade and commerce. In 1894 there were more than five hundred mills and factories in the city. I should say that now there are nearly double that number. They earn, as a rule, enormous dividends, owing to the existence of protective tariffs—25 per cent., 35 per cent. and even 40 per cent. being quite common. The directors and managers receive liberal salaries, comparable to those paid in England. The workmen are generally very poorly paid; but, as a Russian mill hand can live on less than sixpence a day, the small wages are generous compared with what they would earn in the villages, where a day labourer receives only from fivepence or sixpence to tenpence per day.

The majority of the men who toil in the factories from early morn till evening for what would appear to us such wretched pay are peasants, who come from Kostroma, Tver and other governments of the interior whenever they are dissatisfied with the scanty remuneration obtainable in their villages. Almost every workman is a landowner in a small way, or has a share in the commune, which makes him in a measure more independent than his fellow in England; for if he does not earn what he considers a fair wage in the town, he returns to his native place to help the women and old folk with the field work, which is often sadly in need of his co-operation.

The new associations and surroundings found in the cities strongly modify the character of the men. The influence of English, German, French and Belgian workers is permeating the industrial classes, and as this increases, strikes, revolts and outbreaks of discontent are becoming more frequent; but a long time must elapse before the social and political ideas and ideals of the proletariat are accepted, or even comprehended, by the millions of superstitious and ignorant labourers and peasants.

In the governments of Tver, Novgorod and Pskoff, which were once centres of freedom and intercourse with the West, the percentage of illiterates is less than in the interior, where the darkness of the people's minds is almost beyond belief. In spite of this, the Russian peasant can hold his own, especially in making a bargain, and his stupidity is sometimes affected for his own ends. The cunning, due to ages of oppression, has been developed to such a degree that a lawyer of the Volga told me that the peasant will often outwit the cleverest attack of cross-questioning. Added to this, he has the obstinacy of a mule, and a capacity for bearing discomfort and pain that would do credit to a Red Indian. We hear much of the Jews exploiting the poor moujik, but we rarely hear of the instances when the Jew is himself outwitted by the peasant. The Emperor Alexander had a keen sense of their intelligence, and when advised to banish the Jews, lest by their craftiness they should injure his subjects, is reputed to have replied that he did not fear that any Jew would be sharp enough to overreach a Russian.

The following notes, collected during the Japanese War, will give the reader a better idea of the shrewdness and character of the working classes than anything I could write about at the moment. Not even the most autocratic Tsar can afford to ignore the

moujik; the throne really rests upon his broad shoulders, and the moujiks furnish most of the fighting men, who in times of stress—like the peasant patriot Suzanin—stand faithful to the Emperor when perhaps the nobles fail him.

When the war broke out, rumours of the wildest description were circulated concerning its cause and origin. The meagre information given in the newspapers did not tend to enlighten to any great extent even the minority who could read; thus, left to their own resources, the people fell back upon that fertile imagination which seems to be bestowed in especial abundance on the Slav races. As a result, the most fantastic legends sprang into existence and were firmly believed by very many. Most of these were childish in the extreme, but at the same time valuable in giving, as a Russian writer says, "the echo of the popular voice, or, more truly, the soul of the people."

A Russian author who has been at considerable trouble to collect and put into shape a number of these stories relates this anecdote, which circulated through the government of Pskoff, concerning the war and the outbreak of a strange malady, "beri-beri," among the Japanese troops:

"The village teacher who had first spoken to the peasants about this disease was astonished, shortly afterward, to hear in neighbouring villages this version of his story: 'Many Japanese nobles assembled in council, to consider how they could get rid of the Russian moujik, who, you know, is a terrible fellow. He has little land and his plots are barren. He has already beaten the Chinaman, and now he is trying conclusions with the Japanese. The nobles debated long and earnestly, but could come to no decision. They decided to call into their councils the Japanese priests, who are wise men and have understanding

in business. They said to the priests: "If you will solve this problem for us and show us how to get rid of the Russian moujik, we will sew you new vestments." The Japanese pope became thoughtful, and sat on the ground with his head bent to his knees, pondering deeply. "Now, what have you thought of?" the nobles asked. "Say—how shall we drive out the Russians?" "I do not know," was the answer; "they do not believe in our God, and, moreover, our holy icons are not able to sweep them off the face of the earth. Their God is stronger than ours, and, besides, they pray far more than we do." Then the nobles grew angry, drove out the pope, and again set to work. They thought and thought, debated and debated, but all in vain. Then one of them got up and said: "I have found it out; give me then a reward in return. Let us summon our doctors and surgeons and order them to spread the Japanese sickness amongst the moujiks, for it will soon seize them." Forthwith this was done, and the one who had hit on the idea was presented with four cartloads of rice, "because the nobles in these parts have nothing to eat!"'

"The narrator proceeds to tell how the doctors ran to the hospitals and collected 'ingredients,' which they poured into a kettle; how they brought coal and lighted a fire, and even appointed three old women to preside (like the witches in *Macbeth*). These were to feed the fire and to utter incantations at the instigation of the Evil One. They boiled the ingredients for twelve days, and on the thirteenth all the medical men assembled. The cooled mixture was then poured, laden with death, into jars; the nobles called the Japanese soldiers and gave each one a rusk and a jar, with strict orders to throw to the moujiks, whenever they should see one, a rusk. Opening the jars, the soldiers were to call out in Russian, 'Bere, bere' (Take, take), when the moujiks would immedi-

ately take the rusks and perish. Everything was done as arranged. 'When the Japanese saw our moujiks they carried out their orders; but our people are not fools—they stood by and laughed, for they did not believe the Japanese. "Oh, you Japanese children," they exclaimed, "do you think we have never before seen your rusks? Why, in Russia we do not give even our Orthodox brother beggars rusks, but baked bread; we will not take them!" The Japanese insisted and begged and implored, with tearful voices, "Please take, take." But at that moment the fatal odour arose from the jars, and such a pestilence spread round that the Japanese fell dead, despite their repeated cry of "Bere, bere." In consequence of this, that kind of sickness is called "beri-beri."'"

This story shows the childish simplicity of the Russian peasant, who believes that he is far better off than the Japanese nobles, or even than the English; for the former have "nothing to eat," and as for the latter, does not the peasant feed them with his wheat and other agricultural produce?

The announcement that the Tsar had promised to mitigate the sentence of those convicts on the terrible Island of Saghalien who would volunteer to fight the Japanese created a sensation throughout the Russian Empire, and indeed through other parts of Europe. The story of the Tsar's clemency spread from village to village, and the absence of any reliable information tended to give it increased interest, until vivid imaginations gave it the character of a popular legend. Of the many different versions, the following is perhaps the most interesting, as giving an idea of what the peasants think about Saghalien, and showing the awe still felt by millions of them for the Imperial authority. The tale runs thus:

"Far away in the Japanese ocean, close to the Empire of Japan, is the Island of Saghalien. God has cursed the spot, so that on it grow neither trees nor grass. They do not sow or reap there, for rocky boulders encumber the paths, and all the year round it is icy winter. All criminals who are guilty before God and the Tsar are sent to the island; they dwell in caves, feeding on shell-fish, and the convicts work from day to day doing penance and expiating their guilt. They began to long for their families, and wept many bitter tears, for although they were hardened criminals, they were yet human beings. Then they heard that their neighbour the Japanese Power was waging war on Russian territory; moreover, that it had collected many big ships and warriors with guns and cavalry, with which to conquer holy Russia. The poor prisoners bethought them how they would send a petition to their Tsar, saying: 'Great Tsar and Lord, do not command punishment, but deign to listen. We have committed many crimes; we have killed and robbed; we have embezzled and defrauded and have not paid the taxes, and have been forced to do convict labour, as we justly deserve. We have heard that Japan is warring against holy Russia, and that thou wishest to send thy troops against her. Great Master, do not order thy dear little soldiers to be sent, for they are honest men, who have not killed or robbed or defrauded, who have paid their taxes when due and who do no wrong. Order only that old guns shall be given to us, with balls of lead. We will then take those guns and go and conquer the Japanese; thus will we atone for our evil deeds and thus do service for our wickedness before God and thee. Give us, then, a brave leader, and thou wilt see that even we, who are lost men, will do our duty and lay down our lives, should these be required. Hard indeed it is to live in penal servitude and to satisfy our hunger with

naught but sea-fish. Bid us but go out and fight the foe.'

"The Tsar received this petition, and was much moved. Handing it to his War Minister, he said: 'These men are not lost if they wish to atone for their guilt by service. Inform them of my Imperial gratitude, give them new guns, appoint a brave general to command them, and bid them be zealous in the cause of Russia. They are no longer convicts, but my faithful servants.' And the convicts went out to wage war and to execute the orders of the Tsar. 'The Tsar has punished,' they cried, 'but since he announces to us his gratitude, we are forgiven. Let us then shout hurrah, like honest soldiers and servants of the Tsar.' And now the militia of Saghalien stood ready, guarding their rocky caves, and frightening the Japanese, who alone are to blame—not the Tsar."

As is well known, millions of Russians were firmly convinced that we were the instigators of the Russo-Japanese War. It was also part of their creed that we were responsible for the disappearance of Skobeleff, the popular idol. Formerly, when the Germans were in the bad books of the Russians, it was they who had made away with him. According to another account, Skobeleff was alive and well, the ex-Viceroy Alexieff being none other than the hero of the people. But how did he come to be called Alexieff? The fertile brain of the moujik explains the transformation thus: Skobeleff offended a certain Power (Anglia), and the people forthwith demanded his head; but the Tsar was sorry to give up such a man, and said that he was dead. Skobeleff then changed his name; he had to do this, because he spoke ill of the English Queen in the presence of her ambassador. In order to avoid war, the Russian Government informed England that he was dead, and a soldier who resembled him was buried

in his stead. Another legend states that General Linevitch, the experienced and popular soldier who commanded the First Army Corps, was the real Skobeleff. His reappearance was accounted for as follows :—

"After the Turkish War, the Tsar Alexander demanded a contribution from the Turks; but Osman Pasha was obstinate, and said : 'If you do not come down in your demands we shall again declare war against you.' The Tsar then reproached him with ingratitude, saying : 'We have taken thee prisoner, Osman Pasha, and again set thee at liberty, and thou thinkest of again rising up against us. Begin, then, and I will let Skobeleff loose on thee.' On hearing of these words the Englishwoman (the Queen) said to the Tsar : 'Why holdest thou in such high honour thy Skobeleff, as if he were above all justice ?' Michael, the son of Dimitrieff (Skobeleff), who was present, boiled over with anger and called her a bad name [as did Ivan the Terrible to Queen Elizabeth in his letter to her. He called her *poshlaja djevetza* (a spurious maiden) on her refusal to marry him]. The Englishwoman was, of course, greatly offended, and wished to have him tried ; but the Tsar Alexander, before he died (in consequence of the injury he received from Risakoff), commanded in his will that Skobeleff should not be given up to England. This is how he came to bear another name and is now fighting in the Far East."

These amusing stories show not only the love the peasants bear for the hero of Plevna, but the respect they feel for our late Queen, who, in their simple imaginations, must have been a very great personage indeed to rule over such an enormous Empire, and to dare to demand the punishment of the most popular man in Russia. She appeared all the more wonderful

to them since they had not the faintest idea that there existed so powerful a body as the British Parliament. I well remember the awe and sorrow that was shown when "Starooshka Koreljeva Victoria" (the old Lady, Queen Victoria) died. For weeks the event was the principal topic in thousands of villages, whose inhabitants had been familiar with her name for nearly half-a-century. "Your Queen is dead," they said to me with sympathy, believing that every English subject had sustained an irreparable loss. In fact, the respect the peasants entertained for her was so great that during the famine of 1891 and 1892 some of the sufferers in the government of Samara threatened to become subjects of Queen Victoria, as she was giving them eighty pounds' weight of bread, while their own Government only gave them half that quantity!

In the villages, however, a new type of peasant is springing up, who reads the daily papers. It is a thousand pities that he is not supplied with more healthy literature. A large section of the Russian Press—we in England possess a corresponding section—seems to think its chief duty is the sowing of hatred between nations, which, though copecks and pence may flow into their coffers, may eventually lead to trouble. Before the present *entente*, as I have elsewhere observed, millions of people, by the pernicious teachings of the *Svjet*, the *Petersburgsky Listock*, the *Novaya Vremya*, and a few more of the same kidney, came to regard the English as devils incarnate, responsible for nearly all the ills that befell holy Russia. Whether it was war, famine, epidemic or earthquake—"Anglechanen oostroel" (it is the work of the English) was the fervent belief of the peasantry. Considering that this class forms so large a proportion of the population, the absurd and malicious stories thus fostered and circulated demanded more serious

attention. The masses are now becoming educated, very slowly and gradually, and will in the future be a force which no Government will dare to ignore.

Nowhere is the change more clearly seen than in the soldier. During the Turkish War it was most unusual to see a soldier reading a paper; now it is a common occurrence. In the many trains that are being dispatched daily to Galicia one sees a few soldiers singing and smoking, as is their wont, but the majority read, having been instructed by their officers. A correspondent says that books are seldom found; the sensational and impossible charms the mind of the simple moujik more than any solid, sober fact. In days gone by, the soldier used to beg for the paper, in order to roll his cigarettes; now, he asks for it with the idea of posing as an authority on public questions before his less-educated comrades.

There is little doubt that the bureaucracy will have to abandon its present methods when the bulk of the people have reached the level of education obtaining in other civilised countries. Its members, therefore, are not over eager to promote the enlightenment of the masses. The terrible events now occurring in Europe will, however, compel these gentlemen to give more attention to the news supplied to the people of all classes.

The charitable nature of the moujiks is shown by the way in which they treated the Japanese prisoners in the last war. Their arrival, as may be imagined, caused immense excitement, and formed another source for the weaving of legends. In the government of Oofa, near the Urals, this event gave rise to the following tale :—

"Many prisoners were brought from a Japanese town; they were two months on the way through our Siberia. The soldiers were picked out and placed in barracks at

the cost of the Crown. The women were also picked out, and a guard was placed over them, so that the women-folk should not be spoiled in a foreign country. The little children were taken away, clothed, shod and given sunflower seeds to eat, so that they should sit quiet and not quarrel with one another. But the men stood in the barracks and were sad at heart, thinking of their wives and children, while the women sat cross-legged and sighed for their husbands, because they were not accustomed to live without them. The boys, however, were always seeking to play at war with the Russian boys. Then the authorities thought how they should make the Japanese happy and rid themselves of much trouble. At last they came to a decision. They ordered the Japanese to settle on the land, so that their wives and little ones should be given back to them; also horses to plough with, so that they should earn their bread. They received corn from the Crown, and thought to cultivate the ground. But everything went amiss with them; they could not manage the harrow, it was too heavy and painful. The women cried because their husbands could not feed them with bread and beat them; the children were quite forgotten, and without sunflower seeds life was indeed wretched. Then they all begged that they should be placed in their former positions. There was nothing else to be done; the authorities quartered the men in barracks, guarded the women and bought the children sunflower seeds to eat. But after a while it was the same old story over again; everybody was dissatisfied, and the authorities grew angry. Then the Japanese considered the matter, and finally said: 'Is there not some work we could do, but not so hard?' 'What work is there for you to do? You are but dead cattle,' was the answer. 'But, look here,' they replied, 'we see you have taken their horses for the war—permit us to go and

dwell among your moujiks. We will take the place of the horses, for we have been used to that work from our infancy.' At this the authorities laughed heartily, and distributed the prisoners amongst various households, instead of horses. The moujiks followed the plough, as usual, while the Japanese drew it, and all lived in peace and contentment."

This childish tale gives us an insight into the suffering caused by taking away the horses for military purposes, and shows that the peasant is not always so unpractical as he is supposed to be. The poor opinion he has of womenkind is evidenced by the putting of the Japanese women under a guard ; semi-Oriental as he is, he still thinks this necessary, so that they shall not commit folly. Like his own women, they generally howl when they cannot get bread, and the Japanese husband is erroneously supposed to maintain his authority with the stick, as most moujiks unfortunately do. Like the burly moujik, also, the Japanese is made to weep when things go wrong, and it is the Japanese boys who are anxious to wage war with the Russian. The inability of the Japs to do the heavy work filled Ivanovitch with pride, for, whatever we may think of him, he believes that he is infinitely superior, both physically and morally, to every other *Nyzemtze*—a term meaning "dumb one," by which he designates all who do not speak his tongue. That the Japanese—who are really centuries ahead of him in agricultural knowledge—were only fit to draw the plough tickled his pride and confirmed his good opinion of himself. His peace-loving temperament—so opposed to that of Tartar and Cossack—is to be seen in his anxiety that the children should not quarrel, and in the satisfaction with which he winds up the story, by stating that afterwards "all lived in peace and contentment."

The moujik's ideals, on the whole, are those of the Bible ; he thinks and speaks often in Biblical language ; his mental development is slow in the extreme. Like the Founder of Christianity, Ivan is a Communist and a Socialist, but in his knowledge of life and history is as simple as any child at its mother's knee. His faith in his Sovereign, his Church and his superiors is only equalled by his pitiable ignorance ; he fights and prays with the same fervour—prays to all the saints in the calendar. He maintains that Manchuria belongs to Russia, and that the greedy, unbelieving Japanese were striving to wrest it from her. Others of the peasantry, residing in the most distant villages, thought that their one-time enemies were little yellow men, half man, half monkey, and that they lived in a land infested by fierce dragons which belched forth fire and smoke on the faithful soldiers of the Tsar and destroyed them, unless a magic spell could be found to render the evil powers harmless. The Japs were believed to be subjects of the Tsar, who, as they would not sit at home quietly, but revolted against their "Little Father," had to suffer compulsion to restore order.

The legend that has grown up round the tragic end of Admiral Makarieff is perhaps the most beautiful of these remarkable imaginations of the Russian peasant. The sad news of his death excited the deepest sympathy, and the people expressed their feelings in this delightful manner :

"It was on Easter Eve when the Admiral partook of the Holy Communion, kissed the Holy Shroud, and, having assembled his dear little sailors, spoke to them sweetly and graciously. 'To-morrow,' said he, 'Christ the Lord rises from the dead. Go ye all then to the holy matin service and pray to God, for I shall go to sea. My heart forewarns me that the Japanese are going to pay us a visit. We must go out to meet

them.' 'Indeed,' said the little sailors to their kind Admiral, 'why shouldest thou go to sea? Let thy sailors carry out thy orders, meet the enemy with powder and fire and shot; but go thou to the church to early service.' 'No,' the Admiral said, 'I will carry out my duty myself; go you and pray for me. When you have confessed, come to me. Now let us cross ourselves and embrace one another. Go then, my dear little brothers.' The sailors stood still, however, and said nothing, not wishing to leave their Commander. Presently one of them exclaimed: 'It is evident, your Highborn, that the Japanese intend to disturb your rest on holy Easter morn. Great heavens, has the Japanese no God that he wishes to take upon his soul the sin of interfering with divine worship? Come, Admiral — come with us.' The Admiral smiled when he heard these words, but, clapping the man on the shoulder, he cried: 'No, go ye, and when the morning service is finished, come and kiss me and bring red eggs.' The sailors then left him, much saddened.

"Easter Eve arrived. The Admiral took with him a companion, seized the oars and sat down in a wooden boat. They sailed out to sea three miles, cast anchor and looked through the telescope. But the night was dark and the wind howled, so that one could not hear the divine singing, the holy prayers, or the ringing of the church bells. It was terrible on the water while the Admiral sat and watched. 'Look,' said he to his companion, 'I have grown old and do not see anything in the dark. Look thou through the telescope. Dost thou see the Japanese ships? Are they coming against us or not? My heart forewarns me of evil.' His comrade looked through the telescope and was silent; nothing was to be seen ahead—all was black, above and below. 'The Japanese will never approach us in such a darkness; 'tis enough to blind one.'

The Admiral smiled a little, heaved a deep sigh and again gazed into the distance, while the wind raged and the storm moaned. All on a sudden, he sprang to his feet and said: 'Didst thou hear the bells ringing in the town? It is Christ that has risen. Let us worship according to the true Orthodox faith.' He had hardly kissed his friend thrice, as customary, saluting him with the words, "Christos voskres" (Christ is risen), when there rose from the depths of the sea a mine, and struck the boat so that it flew into splinters. The Admiral's body, wounded in many engagements, floated on the waves, and drifted to the place where the Russian soldiers were standing. They had returned from morning service, and stood in a row, ready to salute their Admiral and give him their Easter eggs. But behold, the body floats towards them; it is washed ashore and lies on the sands at their feet. The men weep bitterly. Everlasting peace to his memory."

Thus the simple, God-fearing peasantry weave the story of that tragedy into legendary lore, showing how their beloved and kindly Admiral sped into eternity. The anecdote illustrates well the democratic side of the Russian character, and the amicable relations which often exist between officers and men. "Gentle" was the truest word to describe Makarieff; he was so adored by his sailors that he could lead them, like a father does his children, to do whatever he desired. We see clearly the reverence of the people for their holy days, their horror of the enemy for daring to fight on such a festival as Easter. We see, too, their sublime ignorance of the true end of Makarieff.

Did the peasantry possess but a tithe of the advantages enjoyed by other European nations, they would not be behind in those sterling qualities which go to form the true patriot, the worthy citizen and the

A typical Russian Moujik in the rough state

Russian Peasant begging for alms for the village church

honest supporter of the Throne. Strange doctrines misled them at this period especially, and even now the moujik falls an easy victim to the impossible stories and reports that appear in the popular Press. The more sensational the news, the more he believes it—for is it not printed on paper with black ink, and therefore correct? His reverence for his halfpenny or farthing rag is both comic and tragic. A workman under me once came to me with tears in his eyes and begged permission to go home to his native village, in order that he might die in the bosom of his family, because a certain Petrograd halfpenny paper had predicted that the world was coming to an end on a given date! We may laugh at the poor, credulous fellow and at the paper which so befooled him, but are there not in England specimens of journalism almost as sensational, and thousands of people almost as gullible?

It will be seen that notwithstanding all that has been done for the peasant, or rather one should say, perhaps, all that has not been done, he retains in some respects the darkest ignorance; yet, if he knows not the simplest elements of geography, history, or arithmetic, he understands his farm, the weather, the crops, the habits of birds and animals. His education is not ours; but one can hardly call him strictly uneducated, for the open book of nature teaches him many things which town-dwellers never learn, and in his folk-songs these are embodied and preserved with wonderful beauty and simple skill. Outwardly, he is as rough and uncouth as any bear of his northern forests, but often we find a tender heart beneath this unpromising exterior, and a mind open to all that is inspiring in nature. His craftiness and frequent dishonesty are explained by the fact that his only weapon against his oppressors was deceit and cunning. That he is tough as leather and can endure any hardship is not surprising

when we remember that much of his life is spent on the border-line of starvation. His credulity arises from his vivid imagination. If you tell him of the ordinary progress of events in Paris or London—the tubes, underground railways, telephones—he will tell you plainly that you are fooling him ; but if you asserted that there were silver and gold scattered about the streets he would believe every word, for he has heard many stories of the wealth of the English. Fairy tales and miracles are his native mental fare ; facts concern him very little.

The average peasant, with all his church-going and piety, holds very curious ideas on religion and the will of the Almighty. I heard one amusing story which illustrates this excellently. A droshky-driver once conveyed a gentleman to a certain bank. His fare, who had money and valuable papers with him, pushed them under the cushions for safety while he did his business, but, on returning, to his dismay the man had driven off, taking with him the portfolio, which contained, among other things, notes to the value of several thousand roubles. The owner was, of course, in a great state of perturbation, and informed the police, who forthwith summoned every day a number of the thousands of drivers in Petrograd to report themselves. At last the lost one was recognised, and taxed with the theft ; but the poor fellow was astounded, and stoutly denied having taken either the money or the papers. Orders were given for the cab to be searched—and there, sure enough, was the missing portfolio, with its contents intact. The owner was overjoyed, and gave the man a handsome reward. But the droshky-driver was dumbfounded, and could not understand the reason of his patron's generosity, and when he at last learned that the little leathern book had contained such a small fortune his sorrow and disappointment knew no bounds ; he could not

get over his astonishment, and finally hanged himself in disgust at the thought that God had sent him all that money and he had not taken it !

Nearly all these drivers are peasants from the interior, and, as we have seen, possess their share of mother wit. Tolstoi, in one of his works, says that the wisest man he ever knew was a Russian peasant. In their conversation with one another, every sentence is characterised by some *bon mot*, proverb, or vivid metaphor. So rich are they in this figurative mode of expression that unless one has been brought up in the country they are often very hard to follow and comprehend. It is especially difficult for the matter-of-fact Englishman, German or Scandinavian, who do not bother about metaphorical phrases, but as a rule employ simple, concrete assertions. With them a word generally means a fact ; with a Russian it is frequently an image of something in his mind. Even the smallest boy, almost smothered in his father's or grandfather's huge cap, and his blue kaftan reaching to his toes, is fully able to take care of himself ; also he is so skilled that he will drive you safely about the most crowded streets, so courageous that he will drive through miles of dense forests with dangerous animals lurking in their depths.

The Marquis de Castine, speaking of their ready wit, remarks : " The merest boy or the lowest peasant is never at a loss for an answer, and in this respect offers a striking contrast to the awkward, embarrassed and boorish manners of the German peasantry. The Russian detects in a moment the weak side of another, and no one can with fewer words turn it to ridicule. If, on the one hand, there is no country where fewer *bon mots* are perpetrated than in our good Germany, there is certainly none where they occur more frequently than in Russia. In the streets and market-places, as in the highest society, smart

sayings old and new of Russian origin are perpetually circulating."

Saltikoff, the satirist, in his famous dialogue entitled *The Boy with Trousers and the Boy Without*, shows the remarkable difference in wit and character between the Russian boy (without trousers) and the German boy (with them). Even in early childhood this difference is distinctly to be seen. But if the German boy is clumsy and embarrassed, he is more reliable than his brilliant, versatile Slavonic companion.

Bismarck used to say that as long as a moujik wore his shirt outside his baggy trousers you could trust him; when he tucked it in, wore a top hat, and swaggered about with an umbrella, it was time to beware. An old Scottish resident whom I knew, used to swear at the peasants energetically, and the more he raved, the more he was respected, for they love a strict master who "knows how to abuse you properly." No malice is ever borne for this sort of treatment by the peasant. With the Finn or Calmuck it is a different matter. He has great notions of his own dignity, and if you doubt his word or swear at him too much you run a chance of feeling a knife, even if it be a week after. You may have forgotten the incident, but he will not forget!

XVII

THE TSAR, HIS HOUSEHOLD AND HIS LABOURS

The personality of the Tsar is a subject of general interest. Much depends upon the personal influence of a ruler, particularly if he is head of one of the world's great empires.

In appearance, he strikingly resembles King George, and I have elsewhere mentioned the amusing misunderstandings and mistakes this strong likeness caused. As to character, his favourite English tutor, Mr Heath, told me that the Tsar had such a kind and considerate nature that he would never ask even his servants to do anything if he could do it himself. He is a good sportsman, and could then run a fair distance without fatigue; fond of cycling, he could hit a target while riding his machine. The report that he used to take more interest in his bicycle than in his army must have originated maliciously. Anyone who visits the manœuvres at Krasnoe in peace time, as I have often done, will see, as I saw, the Tsar toiling for hours together, reviewing his troops and following the long operations closely. His exertions and frequent journeys to the Caucasus and the Austrian frontier showed that he, like most of the Grand Dukes, is a soldier at heart.

But it must be remembered that the Tsar of Russia has much more important work than attending military manœuvres. He notes all agricultural and social questions or suggested reforms, and spends much time on the duties of the State. When he was but a young man I expressed the opinion in my book, *Through Famine-stricken Russia*, that he would make

an excellent ruler if he could find good officials and advisers, for in truth he is an upright gentleman, with a fine sense of duty. But not even autocrats can do as they please.

Despite the revolutionists, the Tsar has done much good during his reign, and has introduced measures which will have great influence on the country's future development. If some of his deeds seem unjust in our eyes—for instance, the policy pursued in Finland and in the Baltic Provinces—we must blame his advisers, for I am convinced that he wishes to do justice to his subjects of every race. It is said that he ascended the throne simply from a deep sense of duty and to please his father; he would have been far happier in a less-exalted position; therefore we should not judge too severely one burdened with so difficult a task. He is not responsible for a thousandth part of the wrongs done in his name but without his knowledge. When interviewed by Count Tolstoi the Younger, with whom I worked in the government of Samara during the Great Famine, he said that he felt called by God to discharge certain difficult duties towards the people, and that he was responsible before God alone for the right fulfilment of his task. He was inspired by love for the nation, and would not shrink from any sacrifice in order to ensure its moral and material prosperity. He added that he was also quite willing to relinquish a portion of his prerogative, if by so doing he really furthered the people's welfare—even his rank; he would look upon it as a pleasure, for neither his character nor up-bringing had encouraged in him the desire for power. His own wishes would have been for a quiet family life, undisturbed by affairs of State. He could not sanction a constitution, or meet other radical demands as regarded a representative government; not because he endeavoured to maintain his privileges, but because these demands did not

proceed from the people, and their concession would only mean fresh problems and possibly sufferings. Such was the tenor of his converse with the Count.

Although I do not quite hold with the Tsar, I believe he was perfectly sincere when he said that the agitation for a new form of government did not originate with the masses, and that such a change would bring trouble. When one remembers that millions can neither read nor write, are steeped in ignorance and superstition, and that they have no conception of liberty, it would certainly seem unwise to give these moujiks the vote until some measure of education and understanding has enlightened them to its possibilities. This does not apply to the merchants, manufacturers, nobles, professional classes, shopkeepers and thousands of men in the towns, nor to a proportion of the peasant class which has educated its members fairly well. Something must be done for these, or in the future troubles worse than those of 1905-1906 will arise. This large section must be better represented in the Government, even if universal suffrage is out of the question. What Russia wants is reform, not revolution. The old policy of sitting on the safety-valve must be abandoned, otherwise another eruption of the suppressed forces may come, the horrors of which only those who have seen the lower classes break loose can tell. Such a calamity means the destruction of the innocent with the guilty, the despoiling of immense properties in which Englishmen are interested, and probably the repudiation of Russia's enormous foreign debt, a large part of which is taken up by English and French investors. And the evil might not stop there. When order was restored, when the strong leader was found, who knows but that the teeming population would not use their newly gained strength to overrun Europe. France, a hundred years ago, with only 14,000,000, caused havoc throughout the Continent.

If she could do so much, what could not awakened Russia do? We should not, then, make the position of the Tsar more hard than it is. Our influence must be on the side of judicious reforms gradually introduced, and then we who have such great commercial and industrial interests in Russia shall share in the benefits resulting.

The young Count Tolstoi, with whom the Tsar discussed these matters, held the view that Russia is not yet ripe for a Constitution, in the English sense of the word. He considered that the form of government most suitable would be a Council of the four estates, sitting in the capital. Just as Russian society is split into four distinct classes—nobles, ecclesiastics, burghers and peasants—so should the people be represented. The popular delegates should be chosen by freeholding peasants and members of the village communes; those of the clergy should be selected from among their own members; while those of the towns should be in four groups, so that they might represent the classes mentioned and the various interests of the urban population. Tolstoi confessed that he obtained his idea of the proposed parliament from the old Swedish parliament of the four estates. He held that Sweden, not Germany, was the best model for the social and political reorganisation of Russia—as was the case first under Rurik and afterwards under Peter the Great, who copied from Sweden the idea of ministries and colleges.

In this sketch of the Tsar's problems I have not touched on the political side of his character. Owing to our *entente* with Russia and the strict censorship in the English Press—which obtained even prior to the present war—outspoken comment on these themes is impossible. Since, then, I cannot write from the "desired direction," I prefer to remain silent on many subjects familiar to me, leaving it to those who have

no scruples or sense of responsibility to give such rosy pictures of the internal condition of the country as suits the authorities in power for the time being. Some day the truth will be told, not only about Russia, but concerning other European states with whose destinies our own is closely knit.

The Tsarina was a Princess of Hesse, a grand-daughter of Queen Victoria. She is a good, highly educated lady, taking a great interest in the uplifting of women and in works of charity. She is an excellent mother and a devoted wife, and as beautiful as she is good. She is too fine in character for many of the corrupt courtiers round her, and when I lived in Petrograd was not half as popular as she deserved to be; firstly, because she was of English and German origin, and, secondly, because she did not countenance the lax morality then prevalent in the Court circles. She was derisively called "Anglechanka" and "Puritanka" (Englishwoman and Puritan), but since the two countries have become good friends her English tastes no longer stand in her way. The fact that she had no male offspring also seemed derogatory, the superstitious people interpreting this as a sign that God was displeased with her. In striving for a pure Court, she takes after Queen Victoria, who, as we know, would never tolerate loose living in her immediate entourage. Were the Tsarina to emulate "babooshka Ekaterina" (grandmother Catherine), her popularity would increase at once, but a notoriety of that description she will never, fortunately, attain.

As a rule the royal couple lead a simple family life, but the necessity of keeping up the traditional luxury and ostentation of the Court compels them occasionally to go against their private inclinations. For example, the galas, ceremonials, receptions and parades are carried on with a grandeur surpassing anything seen in other capitals and with an astonishing attention to

detail. The grand banquets and balls at the Winter Palace, at Tsarskoe Selo, Gatchina and other places of residence cost enormous sums of money. All that art and taste can accomplish are there. The late Grand Duke Mechail the Elder, the Tsar's grand-uncle, inherited the simple tastes of so many of the Romanoffs. At ordinary times he led a plain, almost Spartan life, spending very little on his personal comfort, although one of the wealthiest men in Europe. But on special occasions he used to send for the finest Parisian chefs, and would lay out thousands over his feasts. The Imperial family have always employed French chefs, and it is no wonder that some of these skilful artists have returned with a fortune to their native land after a few years in the Tsar's service.

The whole of the very extensive Imperial household was under the control of Count Paul Benckendorff. Next to him came an official in a gorgeous uniform, his tunic sparkling with decorations presented by well-nigh every monarch of significance. In olden days this personage had to swear an oath of fealty, also, if I am not mistaken, to taste each dish before it reached the Tsar. Those serving under him have resplendent uniforms, richly ornamented with gold broidery. All who love to display their persons thus, and have any influence, endeavour to obtain some position in connection with the Court or household. An acquaintance of mine, obsessed with this weakness, after a great deal of effort at last secured one of these posts, with the right of wearing the showy attire. The Tsar, however, was puzzled at this addition to his already extravagant suite, and seeing C—— B—— strolling about like a jackdaw in borrowed plumes, called to his adjutant brusquely: "Who is that cock strutting about over there?" When told, he said: "Tell him to go to the devil and not show his face here any more, for I do not want him." So ended the career of

C—— B—— in the retinue of Alexander II.! This Tsar, like the great Peter, hated all show and ceremony. His room at Gatchina was very small, and he delighted in going about dressed as plainly as possible. His strong common-sense and careful policy made Russia so formidable that for a long time she had only one ally—Montenegro. Of this isolation he was proud, and once, at a banquet, proposed a toast to "Our only Ally—King Nicholas of Montenegro," which was drunk with thunderous applause.

The affairs of the Imperial household are managed by a special chancellery, comprising in its personnel twelve secretaries, four butlers, twenty-four chief waiters, thirty-four lackeys, with eighteen subordinates and fifty-four assistant lackeys. At the head of the kitchen are two chefs, both Frenchmen, whose annual salaries exceed that of any minister. At their disposal are four under-chefs, thirty-eight cooks, twenty apprentices and thirty-two kitchen-boys. The sweetmeat section forms a separate department, the chief of which is also a Frenchman, who has under him two bakers, two confectioners and twenty apprentices. All this luxury and state has to be kept up more for the sake of visitors than for the Tsar's own desires. It is well known that he dislikes artificial foods, preferring the old simple national dishes, such as *borsch*, a soup made from spinach, *tchi*, another soup of sour cabbage with large lumps of beef floating in it, and other concoctions which do not sound particularly appetising to Western ideas. The *piroks* (meat and cabbage pies), the various soups, the black bread, sterlet, pickled mushrooms, gherkins, caviare, a real Russian delights in before the artistic productions of French chefs, who can disguise a cabbage until it appears as a cutlet, and cook potatoes in a hundred different ways. One must possess a truly Russian digestion, though, to stand the national menus.

At the Court only French champagne and Bordeaux wines of the finest vintages are consumed. The excellent Caucasian, Bessarabian, Crimean and other wines grown in the south cannot as yet supplant these, though they are probably purer and far more nutritious. When the last Tsar was twitted with preferring foreign champagne to the sweet but dangerous brand brewed in his own country, he replied in the words of Bismarck when his friends tried to persuade him to drink only champagne: "The stomach knows nothing about politics!" The Tsar is right, for some of the young Caucasian wines are so raw and ill prepared that courage and a strong stomach are required to swallow them. Possibly the practice of keeping the wine in bullock-skins has something to do with their harsh, peculiar taste.

Much fruit is consumed at the Imperial table, and the pears, which are sent from Paris, cost at least a shilling each. Large quantities of apples, grapes and melons come from the Crimea to Petrograd, but I do not know whether they reach the Court. The gold and silver plate, richly enamelled by skilled artists, is a wonderful sight, but there is no need to describe it in detail or to do more than mention its very beautiful and elaborate design.

XVIII

HOTELS AND RESTAURANTS

Considering the two million inhabitants of Petrograd, it cannot be said that the city is well provided with first-class hotels. For this reason many visitors prefer to stay at one of the numerous pensions—*Mebelorovanne komnate* — which make good the deficiency. A comfortable place, and one of the most popular of the larger hotels, is the Angleterre (Gostenetza Anglija), in the St Isaac Square, exactly opposite the cathedral of that name. For many years this favourite centre of the English colony of the capital was under the direction of the good-natured, hospitable Herr Kluge, brother of Professor Kluge of the University of Jena. When almost a boy, this worthy host ran away from home. He once told me that he cared nothing for learning—his one ambition in life was to become a noted chef and to manage a hotel. In course of time this ambition was realised, and under his expert control the Hôtel d'Angleterre became famous for its good dinners, moderate charges and general comfort. So celebrated did these dinners at last become that I have known Americans, to whom distance and money were of no account, travel all the way from Berlin simply to dine with "Old Kluge." In time he grew so successful that he took over the Hôtel de l'Europe in the Mechailoff Street, which in those days was considered the best in the city. After attaining this long-sought fame, Kluge made so many friends that they actually shortened his useful, merry career by treating him too well. He was killed by kindness, and died comparatively young, missed by

all who knew his rotund, beaming countenance and his good heart. He was married to a handsome Englishwoman who came from Leicester, and he had lived so long in England that to all intents and purposes he was a typical John Bull of the olden school, bluff, genial and generous.

Another house much frequented by the English was the Hôtel de la France, in the Grande Morskaja. It is famous for its rouble and rouble-and-fifty luncheons, and is now patronised greatly by Russian officers, officials and tourists of various nationalities. The Bolshaja Sjevernaja Gostenetza, opposite the Nicholas Railway Station, is an imposing pile, but somewhat too "Roosky" for my taste. Most of the really Russian hotels are furnished with great magnificence, but are often dirty and dusty beyond belief. It is difficult to make pure Russians understand the necessity of keeping their rooms spotlessly clean and free from small unwelcome visitors. Nearly every moujik, and many who are above the moujik class, devoutly believes that these insect pests are necessary parts of creation, and that the trifling amount of nourishment they extract from their unwilling victims is good for the general health, preventing them from becoming too full-blooded and thus developing apoplexy. A charming belief, perhaps, but decidedly inconvenient to cleanly Westerners!

There is a modest hotel on the Kazanskaja, but as it is used chiefly by Germans from the Baltic Provinces, I will not take the responsibility of recommending it to my countrymen. The Hôtel de l'Europe, in the Mechailoffsky, is perhaps the best old-fashioned one in Petrograd, but it is not particularly cheap or comfortable. The best hotel of all, however, is the "Astora" Hotel, managed entirely on modern lines. There are many second-class houses, among them the Europa, the Palais Royal, "Regina" and the

Hermitage, but intending visitors should remember the pensions on the Nevsky, Petit Morskaja and the Ligoffskaja. Excellent boarding-houses exist for those who are making a long stay, kept by English ladies, on the Vasilii Ostroff. In one of these I resided for many years.

The food in Petrograd is, on the whole, inexpensive and nicely varied. In no city is it possible to obtain excellent meat, game and fish at such reasonable charges. In shopping, I have always found it wise to send the servant or housekeeper. The Russian shopkeeper has a habit of putting up his prices if he thinks his customer can afford to pay well. "Kak pokoopa, tel tak tsena" (As the buyer, so the price) is his motto. This is so much the case that my old Finnish servant, being a poor woman, could invariably purchase the provisions required for my household at about half what I paid whenever I essayed to do my own shopping. Sometimes I did it, but was usually "done" myself in the bargain, for immediately I appeared the cunning salesman, seeing that I was a *barin* (gentleman), in his opinion, doubled the legitimate cost. With me and members of my class he threw conscience to the winds, but with the poor he showed a less grasping turn of mind.

As a rule beef, game and fresh-water fish can be obtained at about half the English prices; vegetables and fruit, however, are dear, especially during the winter months, when they are either brought from the south or imported from abroad. In the summer strawberries and raspberries are exceedingly cheap, also grapes and melons, which come in plenty from the south of Russia, Astrachan and Bessarabia. Then the fruit stores along the Nevsky and the Grand Morskaja are filled to overflowing with every kind of grape—delicate ones from the Crimea, amber beauties from the sunny south and Constantinople, and other

varieties that are never seen in this country. As a rule they are about sixpence a pound, water-melons about fourpence, fivepence and sixpence each, but in the south, that land of plenty, grapes can be bought for a penny a pound, and melons at a penny each. Turkeys in this district cost about tenpence each, and geese less than a shilling. Considering the transport —the enormous distances—the prices charged in the capital for meat, game, fruit and fish are most moderate. Wine follows the same rule. For R.1.50 (3s.) a large jar or puncheon of Crimean wine can be obtained. There are many sorts of native wine—Bessarabian, Crimean, South Russian, Caucasian, Kjachitnskaja and others. Connoisseurs, who know the vintages, can purchase wine cheaply, but the uninitiated may find themselves drinking a concoction of logwood, raw grape juice, spirit and vile chemicals that will make them vow never to touch Russian wine again. Russian champagne is a beverage which I should advise strangers to beware of. It is generally so sweet, and so carelessly prepared, that it cannot be recommended. The material for the wine industry in Russia is excellent, and vast quantities of raw wine are exported to France to be made into claret; but the Russians have not yet learnt the secret of preparing a first-class, palatable wine—with few exceptions. In general, I found the wines from the vineyards of the Emperor and the Grand Dukes superior in quality, aroma and purity to those from the vineyards of private firms.

Petrograd, like Moscow, has always been famous for its restaurants. The people are exceedingly partial to the delights of the table. From the earliest times Russian chroniclers have noted that the old Russian dearly loved merry-making and good living, and these characteristics remain to the present day, in spite of the constant invasions and vicissitudes

that have taken place. As might be expected with a race so frequently conquered and often in contact with many strange peoples, traces of Tartar, German, French, Italian, Polish and even Caucasian influences can be seen. The Zakooska, which resembles in some respects the Swedish *smörgas-bord*, is peculiar to Russia and the three kingdoms inhabited by the Norsemen. These people attach much importance to the mysteries of the side table. The *shashlik*, pieces of stewed bacon sprinkled with herbs, is a common dish; beefsteak *à la* Tartar (raw beef sprinkled with condiments and salt) is of Tartar origin. But there are also many distinctive and peculiarly Russian dishes, among which may be included the *tchi* (cabbage soup), the *pirokee* (cabbage pies), sturgeon cutlets, caviare and many other delicacies which are only obtainable in Russia.

In the better-class restaurants the traveller is free to make acquaintance with all these, which also include smoked reindeer tongues from Archangel, smoked ox tongues from the Caucasus, smoked fish from the Gulf of Finland, grapes and melons from Astrachan, rosy apples from the Crimea, pickled mushrooms and many other edibles. In the French restaurants and other favourite resorts of the well-to-do excellent French cooking is to be found at a not too expensive price, when everything is taken into consideration—the high duty charged on imported wines and other articles of luxury.

There is also a famous Milanese restaurant, the Brothers Pivato, where all the delicacies of Italy are to be found. Many restaurants of German origin cater for those who can stand the peculiar cooking of the Fatherland. The Russians believe in a good table, and rich folk spend immense sums in gastronomical pleasures. They are noted for their hospitality, and in the houses of the rich merchants the tables groan

with quantities of fish, flesh, fowl, together with all kinds of wines, spirits and liqueurs. When these do not suffice, resort is made to the wines of Germany, Italy and France, for which very high prices are charged. The extravagance of the Petrogradian is astonishing when the comparatively small incomes of the officers and the gilded youth are taken into account. The most costly champagne, brandy, liqueurs and cigars find a ready market here; the duties are so high that it only pays to import the best. Often a sovereign or more is given for a single bottle of champagne and three shillings for a bottle of English stout. No matter what it costs, the "nuts" of Petrograd will have the best, even if their expensive tastes land them ultimately in prison, for in Russia debtors are still punished with imprisonment.

It is owing to this extravagance that there are so many *lombards* (pawnshops) in Petrograd, which advance money on jewellery, expensive furs and other valuables, thus helping these votaries of pleasure to tide over the dangers pending the welcome date of the 20th, when every Government employee receives his salary and can redeem articles that have been temporarily "popped." In Gogol we meet with an amusing character in the person of Ivan Alexandrovitch Khlistakoff, who is always getting into debt and trouble, and who in many respects is a typical representative of the upper-class youth of the gay capital. This type of citizen is always borrowing, without the faintest possible hope of ever paying off his loans. The escapades of these young "bloods" and some of the members of the aristocracy and the ducal families are a theme of continual wonder and gossip among the busybodies. I remember one restaurant, the Mjedved, noted for its excellent wines, which used to be a favourite resort of the young Grand Dukes, whose adventures were for a long time the talk of the town.

They were probably not an iota worse than thousands of other young men in the city, but owing to their exalted rank were picked out for special attention by the "do-nothings."

Another restaurant, the Leiner, famous for its good Munich beer, was for a long time frequented by a swash-buckler officer, who was a dead shot and skilled swordsman. He amused himself by challenging and shooting anyone who was so unwise as to enter into an argument with him. Let us hope that he, like many others of his type, has long ago met the fate he so heartlessly dealt out to others who had no chance against his pistols. Duelling is still frequent in Russia, especially among the young men and officers from the Baltic Provinces, who imagine that their honour can be satisfied in no other way than by killing the man who has offended them, or by running him through with a rapier. For instance, one of my pupils wished to fight a duel with another student for taking liberties with his servant maid, an ignorant country girl, who had not the slightest conception of what satisfying honour meant. It was only with the greatest difficulty that I could persuade the young men to abandon their fight. Many a handsome young fellow I have known or heard of has met his death in this manner, often on account of the most trifling quarrel.

Duelling also exists in the army, but questions as to the conditions of the encounter and whether it is obligatory for an officer to fight are usually decided by an officers' Court of Honour, and a man is not called on to fight unless his superiors consider it necessary. These mediæval and barbarous ideas have been imported from Germany and are really not Russian at all, or in accordance with the Russian character, which is easy-going and much more inclined to forgive than to take revenge for an insult or slight.

The craze for satisfying an officer's honour was at one time quite a nuisance in Petrograd, and as long as Prussian influence obtained in the army many civilians were shot to uphold the "honour of the regiment." Even in the days of Gustav Adolphus these ridiculous performances took place and were only stopped by the wise and brave King ordering the survivor to be decapitated immediately after he had killed his antagonist. Were this method introduced into Russia it would be an excellent thing, for as long as the ordinary law exists it should be carried out and its decisions respected by all classes of the population, even including the military. Only when common law is impossible and at an end should military law and duelling be allowed.

Besides the numerous restaurants, there are the *kafene* (coffee-houses), which attract a great number of the middle classes. The majority of these establishments are found in the Nevsky, the Letennaja and the Sadovaja. Many of them are very luxurious, especially one in the Nevsky, much frequented by the nymphs of the pavement, who here make appointments with their admirers. The remarkable choice of cakes, muffins and pastry to be found in these places is astounding and bears witness to the skill of the Russians in the making of every variety of bread, from the simple rye loaf, sold at a halfpenny per pound, to the most luscious bread made from the very finest wheat grown on the Volga. There is also an excellent Italian restaurant and confectionery on the Nevsky, called "Domenico's," one of the oldest in Petrograd, made famous in many a Russian novel. Here young officers, students, needy officials and others stroll in to read the newspapers and sip coffee, or still more frequently a glass of tea flavoured with lemon. This place is also a favourite resort of the secret police, who watch the unfortunate students

and suspected persons as they stroll incessantly up and down the Nevsky. It was while taking a cup of coffee in this restaurant, which is exactly opposite the cathedral, that I witnessed the riots I have described in a previous chapter.

There are many good restaurants frequented by the upper and middle classes, and *trakteers* abound, the favourite resorts of every genuine Russian, from the rich *koopetz* in his long kaftan and top-boots to the humblest moujik, who has perhaps tramped hundreds of miles into town from the country, either in search of work or to pray before some wonderful, miraculous icon, which he firmly believes has the mysterious power of healing all the ills that flesh is heir to and bringing him luck. I have often seen grey-coated country yokels staring in awe and astonishment at the wonders of Petre, as they familiarly call Petrograd. In their villages they have heard about "iron horses" that were propelled by steam, of enormous vessels with the same motive power, of wonderful palaces, churches and bridges "which hang in the air without support," but they never imagined anything equal to what now meets their astonished gaze. How different from the long, dreary, straggling village with its hundred wooden log-huts, the big central high-road in which men and horses sink in mud to their middles, the little church with its gilded cupolas and icons covered with silver, tinsel and inlaid with precious stones—made of coloured glass! Here everything is real—the dome of St Isaac's is covered with real gold, the jewels are genuine and every vessel used in the ceremonies is of solid gold and silver. Truly Petre is a veritable earthly paradise, a fairy city to poor, ignorant Ivan Ivanovitch when he first sets foot in it, and before he has made the acquaintance of the unhealthy cellar basements and wretched habitations in which the poor have to dwell, owing

to the high rates charged by the owners of the property.

What the club is to the officers and merchants, the *trakteer* is to the peasant. It is here that he meets his fellow-toilers and discusses with them the events of the day, as criticism of home affairs is tabooed. The illiterate moujiks knowingly talk over the policy of England, France and Germany, although some of the would-be politicians have the haziest ideas of where these countries are or in whose hands the government of each is vested. Their self-assurance is only equalled by their ignorance; they make the most astonishing assertions. During the Japanese War the fear and suspicion of England assumed marvellous proportions, while during the Turkish War it was imagined that Englishmen were the cause of all Russia's disasters, both at home and abroad. If there was a defeat, a plague, a pestilence, a famine, or if the crops failed, it was all the work of *Anglechanka*, by which term the moujiks meant Britannia. Where Britain was on the map the majority had not the faintest idea. On asking a peasant from Novgorod where England was and what kind of people the English were, he gravely informed me in a very positive manner that the English lived on an island, that they were the same people as the Turks, that they had many wives, and that they fought Holy Russia with the aid of the unbelieving Mohammedans, because they themselves were also of the faith of Mohammed. This delusion, however, existed when we were supposed to be assisting Turkey with the aid of Beaconsfield, the "unbelieving Jew," as he was called.

Dozens of peasants may be seen at all hours of the day in the tea-shops with a piece of sugar between their teeth, for the price being sixpence a pound it is far too much of a luxury to put into a cup. The atmosphere of these places is very thick, what with

the strong smell of the tea-urns mingled with the perspiration oozing from the bodies of the peasants busy drinking. But the hotter, the more stuffy and the more odoriferous the air, the more it is enjoyed by the Russian moujik, whose sensibilities seem only to be reached by the most awful of smells. Whilst the tea-drinking is in full swing and argument is at its highest, a large Swiss organ or musical-box discourses sweet music to the ears of the assembled guests. This music consists of folk-songs, dances, marches, with a plentiful accompaniment of drums, bells, cymbals and tambourines. These all make such an awful din that the excitement of the debaters is cooled.

The peasant merchants frequent better-class tea-shops, resplendent with gaudy pictures, damask curtains and frescoes, but with dirty carpets containing all sorts of vermin. These pests do not trouble the ordinary Russian at all, for he seems to possess a skin as impervious as that of the hippopotamus. In these *trakteers* business to the tune of millions of roubles is carried on daily by merchants attired in long blue gowns and top-boots. English, Germans and Frenchmen who have not considered it beneath their dignity to fall in with the customs of this class have done business with these Russians and laid the foundation of a good trade.

In some of these tea-shops the organs are marvels in ingenuity and cost enormous sums of money. The poorer ones cannot afford expensive instruments, and noise very often has to take the place of melody. The *trakteers* are not only tea-shops; wine, liqueurs and various articles of food and drink can be obtained there. The majority of them are too "Roosky" for the ordinary traveller, whose skin has not been hardened by years of residence in Russia and whose olfactory organs are still susceptible.

XIX

THEATRES, CONCERTS AND PLEASURE GARDENS

Ever since the days of the Empress Catherine II. Petrograd has been noted for its theatres. The principal ones are the Mariensky, the home of ballet and opera; the Imperial Alexander Theatre on the Nevsky; the Mechail, where French dramas and comedies are performed. There was formerly a German theatre, under the management of the talented impresario, Philip Bock, but since all pertaining to that nation has become anathema in Russia, German productions have been done away with. Besides these Crown theatres, there are a number of private houses—the Aquarium, the Vaseleostroffsky on the island, the Little Theatre on the Fontanka, the Panaieff on the Admiralty Quay, and the Pavloff on the Troitskaja. There are also summer theatres, where Shakespearean melodrama and French operettas are given, in various gardens surrounding the city, for the benefit of all who have not had their fill of such amusements during the winter season, and an excellent one attached to the Conservatoire, which is simply the Great Theatre erected by Catherine II., converted into an Academy of Music at an enormous outlay, after the original building mysteriously caught fire about twenty years ago and was completely gutted. In this beautiful place some of the best works of Russian composers are given before being performed at the Crown theatres.

At the old Hermitage Theatre, erected by Catherine's orders in the palace of that name, the Empress not only encouraged the drama and the ballet, but staged

her own productions regardless of cost, for she was ambitious to shine in literature as well as in statesmanship. It was in the form of a Roman circus, but on a smaller scale. Walls and columns were of marble, and the seats were covered with green velvet, ranged tier on tier in a semicircle. The Empress had no specially reserved place, but whenever she attended an arm-chair was at her disposal. This comparatively small theatre saw almost all the renowned artists of the Continent, for Catherine paid huge sums to attract foreign talent. Sarte, Galuppi, Paeziello performed here, and among musicians Detz, Lolle, Tode and many others graced the stage, besides all the famous dancers of the time. Many of these artists were known to all the world, but some of them achieved in Petrograd, at the dissolute Court, notoriety of quite another kind. Maxwell, in his work on Russia, says that many returned to their own country with fame and fortune, and proceeds :

"The singular conduct of the Emperor Paul with respect to the Allies (England, Austria and Prussia) has been attributed to the influence of a French actress. It appears that the secret agents of France in Russia induced a very fascinating person named Chevalier to visit Petrograd. This woman was skilled in music, of which the monarch was passionately fond. Watching for his presence, she sang, one evening, a song celebrating his generosity and valour—the siren song that led to his destruction. She became the idol of the infatuated Paul, and, acting in accordance with the directions of her subtle countrymen, she persuaded him to recall Souvoroff from Italy, and to break off the Austrian alliance. She next received bribes from Zooboff and others, the exiled favourites of Catherine, and interceded successfully on behalf of those who were to be the assassins of her Imperial

lover. When he was murdered she applied for permission to leave the country; this was granted on condition that she returned a diamond cross that had once been the property of Peter the Great. Madame Chevalier was not at all disposed to give up this precious relic, resisted stoutly the officer who was sent to take it from her, and finally departed with a million in jewellery and money."

This beautiful, unscrupulous adventuress was not the only one who waxed rich on the foibles of the Romanoffs. Cora Perl, who wrote an account of her life and adventures, is another type of this class of woman, who put their personal charms to the worst uses for the sake of money.

History shows that the ladies of the stage have had a peculiar fascination for the Imperial house and the aristocracy of Petrograd, several members of which have contracted marriages with eminent dancers and singers. At this we need not be surprised, for many of the artists of the Imperial theatres are educated, virtuous women. Some whom I have met are excellent wives, others are faithful mistresses, loved and respected by all who have the privilege of their acquaintance. In Russia, for reasons which I need not explain here, a mistress does not sink to that level of degradation and contempt common in England, Germany and other Protestant countries, which behave with especial severity to those whom they are pleased to term "fallen women."

Catherine did her utmost to procure the services of Gabrielle, a famous Italian danseuse, offering her R.12,000, an enormous wage in those days. On being informed that a Field-Marshal did not receive such a sum, the actress replied: "Your great Empress can make as many Field-Marshals as she chooses, but there is only one Gabrielle!" Besides this star there

was Markese, a eunuch with a woman's voice, who played female parts; Tode, noted for her voice and loveliness, but later on more famous for her liaison with Count Bezborodko—whose devastated palace and park I have often visited; Mondene, a handsome Italian baritone, over whom the Russian ladies simply raved, just as in later years they have over the de Rezkes. Mondene, says one writer, drove them to extremes of folly; for his sake they argue, and "wear badges which he distributed among them. Princess Dolgorouki applauds him alone from her box, and is quite beside herself, and the Princess Kuraken related with ecstasy that Mondene passed the evening with her in his dressing-gown, and wore a night-cap!" His wife, a flighty Parisian, was received everywhere on account of his popularity. From what I have seen of this aspect of Russian life, and the costly gifts which ladies showered upon their favourites, both in Moscow and Petrograd, I should say that the statements of this observer, Count Rostopchin, are not in the least exaggerated. All Russians love music, and when roused to admiration by a really great artist their generosity and enthusiasm know no bounds. Once, when I lived in Moscow, Andrade received on his benefit night not only expensive jewellery, but a pair of white horses. Another artist—I believe it was Savena—was presented with a large stone house by her admirers on a similar occasion. The people are extremists in all things. If they love, they love with their whole soul; if they strike, it is with all their strength; if they give, they count no cost.

Long before the building of the Hermitage Theatre the comedies of the versatile Empress were given on the stage of the Little Theatre in the Winter Palace, and on 20th January 1773, for the first time, Catherine's comedy, *O, Time* (O, Vremya), was placed on the boards. A fitting title, if it described the gay

doings of the Court, only a part of which I may hint at in this volume. These pieces afterwards were staged at the public theatres.

During Catherine's reign the utmost interest was shown in the sayings and doings of actresses and actors who came to the capital, and this tendency is still to be observed in Petrograd, the escapades of artists being chronicled and discussed with the greatest seriousness. The scandal and tittle-tattle that centred in Guitry, the French actor, would fill a book. Political affairs being a forbidden topic, it is no wonder that in a country where the leading members of society become infected with this craze, it should run through all classes.

In those days the staging of a play could not be compared with the profusion and taste now lavished upon good productions. It was comical to note the poverty of the decorations, machinery and costumes. There were, however, exceptions, as for instance in 1788, when the Empress presented an entire richly fitted wardrobe of dresses for two presentations of her historical play, *Oleg*, founded on the character of the man who first conquered Constantinople, about one thousand years ago. The Russians, of course, have always cast longing eyes on that city since Olaf Trygvarsen brought from there a Greek priest to baptize the pagan subjects of Vladimir the Great, and Catherine, knowing the popular ambition toward the acquisition of Byzantium, did well to take this theme. Count Bezborodko, who was a man of letters, had recently acquired a precious MS., containing the account of the campaign of Ivor (Igor) the Varangian against the Polotzeff. The full title of the drama was: *The Beginning of the Rule of Olaf, in the manner of Shakespeare, without preserving the usual Rules of the Stage: in Five Acts.* The music was composed by Sarto, with his own explanation, translated by Lvoff,

1791. The play, richly bound, is extremely valuable, and is much sought by bibliophiles, as only a few hundred copies were printed, for the Empress's friends and admirers. It is said that R.15,000 were spent on the staging.

Catherine's love for the theatre had much to do with the growth and development of both the drama and the ballet, and it must be attributed to her influence, to a large extent, that the appreciation of these artistic performances has spread down through the aristocracy to the commercial magnates, who in Moscow sometimes show their enthusiasm by supporting a theatre entirely at their own expense. In Russia there have been many such patrons of the arts as Sir Joseph Beecham, and this, with the steady assistance of the State, has done much to place Russian opera and dancing in the high position they now hold. Mamontoff and von Meck, the railway plutocrat of Moscow, are two noted names in this connection, and Bjelaieff, a wealthy timber merchant of Petrograd, printed and produced the works of several composers at his own cost. Of the latter, whom I often met, Mrs Rosa Newmarch writes: "He was born in 1836, and was an exception to the Russian commercial man of his day, having studied the violin and piano in his youth, and found time, amid the demands of a large business, to occupy his leisure with chamber music. I recall in him a brusque, energetic and somewhat choleric personality of the 'rough diamond' type; a passionate but rather indiscriminate enthusiast, and an autocrat." Desiring to give some practical support to national music, he founded in 1885 a publishing house in Leipzig, where he brought out a number of works by members of the then new school, including a fine edition of Borodin's *Prince Igor*. He also began the splendid symphony concerts, which I often used to attend. Unfortunately for Russian art, Bjelaieff

met with an untimely death at the hand of a woman whom he had once loved. In him Russian music lost a friend who cannot soon be replaced. By the munificence of such men the nation, comparatively young as a state, has been able to produce some of the best ballet music in the world, and to bring into existence a national opera which in the last few seasons has excited the admiration of London, Paris and Berlin. It is certain that there are now in Russia very many talented artists, besides Glinka, Tchaikoffsky, Moussorgsky, Korsakoff, the familiar names to music lovers, whose work is as yet entirely unknown outside their own land.

The folk-songs of Russia form one of the musician's finest sources of inspiration. It needs but a slight acquaintance with the nation's music to discover to what an extent this has been exploited. Cavos, a Venetian, whose grandson was one of my intimate friends, was, strange to say, the first foreigner to show the Russians the value of their own national melodies. Before his advent composers had turned to Italy and France, neglecting the rich wealth at their own doors. His example was followed by Glinka, who in his operas, *Prince Holmsky* and *Ruslan and Ludmela*, used ancient songs of the people and *bwilinas* richly expressive of Slavonic character and sentiment. After his death Anton Rubinstein, who was of Jewish origin, turned his attention to the same inexhaustible field, writing a series of songs founded on the simple, plaintive folk-music. He then veered to Biblical and classical themes, and I was present when he produced his great opera, *The Tower of Babel*. On this occasion I sang in the chorus, and shall not soon forget the composer, as he stood before us, his hair dishevelled, his collar limp, his shirt-front like a crumpled newspaper, perspiring from every pore; nor his almost superhuman efforts on that night in the Hall of the

Salle de Noblesse, where this work was first heard. I remember that at the tragic moment, when the great Tower was supposed to fall with a crash of drums and loud cymbals, one of the musicians grew so excited that he let the drumsticks fly from his hands among the startled audience! Again seeking the folk-songs, he composed, later on, *The Demon*, a setting of a Caucasian legend by Lermontoff, and *The Merchant of Kalaschnikoff*, in which he exposed the diabolical cruelty of Ivan the Terrible; but this, perhaps his finest work, was forbidden in Moscow and Petrograd, as it was considered to reflect unduly upon the autocratic claims of the Tsars. Rubinstein was succeeded by Balakarieff and other moderns, such as Tchaikoffsky. In order that Tchaikoffsky should be free to follow his talent untroubled by pecuniary cares, the Baroness von Meck, whom I have mentioned, made him an allowance of about £600 a year from her private purse, paid on the curious condition that he should never show his face to the donor of the bounty, it is said. Whether this is true I do not know; but, though I was a tutor of the von Mecks, I never met the composer in their house. Afterwards I frequently encountered him in Petrograd at the Lieder Tafel, of which I was a member. He was a handsome, well-knit little man, with fine features and a pleasing manner.

It would take too long to give all the instances in which Tchaikoffsky, Rachmaninoff, Kue and other composers have drawn on Russian folk-songs for their famous works. I can only assure all lovers of music that in those songs and melodies there is a great and scarcely tried field for all composers to explore—a veritable realm of romance and poetry which will well repay the closest attention.

There are in Russia many "People's Theatres"—more popular places of dramatic entertainment. The

one in Petrograd (the Narodny Dom) owes its existence to the generosity of the present Tsar, and is close to the Zoological Gardens. It is well worth a visit, for in its way it is quite original. In Kharkoff and several other provincial towns theatres have been constructed after the same model. They generally contain a spacious stage, a concert hall, a library and reading-room, and a tea-room; the different departments are looked after by various educational and philanthropic societies. The Society for Popular Education sees to the lectures and the library, other bodies control the theatrical work and the choral music; the games are supervised by the Society for the Protection of Children, while the buffets are in the hands of the Committee for the encouragement of temperance—this latter, which is doing good work, has also a barge on the Neva fitted up as accommodation for such workmen as are teetotallers. Many of the large mills round the capital and in the neighbourhood of Moscow, in order to encourage temperance among the men, have built similar People's Houses, with pleasure-gardens attached. It is a curious fact that the peasants, the majority of whom can neither read nor write, enjoy Shakespeare's plays, and seem to understand his philosophy of the human heart. *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*, the chief favourites in these folk-theatres, are repeatedly given. The moujiks look upon Hamlet as a weak man, who could not make up his mind, but for Macbeth, who "dare do all that becomes a man," they have the liveliest admiration. The Russian language is exceedingly rich, and it is easy to render the substance of Shakespeare's thought and feeling into this tongue. In fact I often think that Russian and German translations of the great poet are the nearest to the original of any that I know. French, Spanish and Italian do not seem capable of giving a faithful interpretation of the true meaning,

and in some foreign renderings the speeches of the heroes are made simply ridiculous. This difficulty I have never found in Russia, and I have followed in the folk-theatres many a Shakespearean play as interpreted by a popular Russian actor with the greatest pleasure.

French comedies and choral open-air concerts are also popular in these places, and I have listened to them all, sometimes in the autumn until the damp and chilly atmosphere sent me homeward shivering. There are many side-shows, where the youth of Petrograd turn night into day, drinking tea or supping with the gipsies and Little Russian dancers and singers. These swarthy daughters of the steppes seem to exercise a great fascination. During the short summer the half-wild Zigana women, with their passionate love songs and their Oriental dances, earn thousands of roubles from their admirers. I once knew a merchant who spent immense sums upon them, his delight being to have about thirty of them round him dancing and singing weird Southern and Caucasian melodies, to the accompaniment of guitars and tambourines, and other queer instruments peculiar to the older world. After spending several million roubles in pleasure, he died almost poor, "a short life and a merry one" being his motto. As a rule I did not find these dark-skinned women, with burning eyes and jet-black hair, particularly beautiful. Their charms appeal more to the primitive man than to those brought up amid Western ideas. Their supple limbs, languorous movements, their voices vibrant with emotion, have been the ruin of many a man who in all things but where women were concerned was a model of common-sense and prudence. But all prudence flies to the winds when they begin to rock their voluptuous bodies from side to side and to sing an enchanting love song, and young men—old ones too, very often—fall an easy

prey; the hours speed on, and the roubles fly too, if they are handy. Who thinks of roubles when he is in Paradise? Many a poor gipsy returns to her home in Bessarabia, Galicia or Little Russia with thousands, earned in a single season in the city. In the summer she may wander through Europe with her kinsfolk, obtaining a strange knowledge of life. I have even met them in Surrey, mending pots and pans, yet well-to-do with money earned in Russia. They are generally splendid linguists. Not all of them are mercenary, however; many of these children of nature are capable of great self-sacrifice, especially when love comes to them. Some have married into the most influential Russian families and are happy; but it is a risky experiment. They are impatient of the restraints of civilisation, and settle with difficulty, as a rule, to the humdrum occupations of a city life, even though wealth relieves the monotony as much as is possible.

The pleasure gardens of the city are often intensely dull, and in the evenings are liable to be damp. I do not recommend them to visitors, a drive round the parks or environs being much preferable. The spectators have little or no protection from the heavy dews which sweep across from the river like a misty cloud as soon as the sun sets. To stand about for hours needs a patience which none but Russians know. About ten o'clock guests from all parts of the city begin to arrive in taxis and other conveyances. This is early for Petrograd, for the real life of the city only begins towards eleven o'clock, by which time the people seem thoroughly awakened. Occasionally, when I went to these spots, the stuffy atmosphere grew quite overpowering; all I could do was to sit on a bench and listen to the strains of a fine military band playing folk-tunes to the delighted public. How bitter a cup of suffering has been drained by the Russian people

can only be realised by those who know their history, with its long record of massacre, civil wars and invasions, and the plaintive story is expressed in this music of humanity. Had it not been for the solace of music, one imagines that the people would be as the beasts of the field. After an hour or two I would sometimes return home on foot, to have an opportunity of studying the night life of the streets. At midnight most of the highways, long and sombre, were deserted save for some drunken moujik staggering slowly along, singing, of course, a love ditty in honour of his Marsha, Greesha or some other flame. The policeman standing at each corner, or the porter watching before each house door, took no notice, well knowing that if every intoxicated labourer was arrested all the cells of Petrograd would not suffice. The thought that the reveller is a good citizen, bringing by his excesses revenue to the Crown, might also have flashed through his brain—it would hardly be fair to punish a man whose custom, and that of his kind, brought in many millions sterling to the authorities who employ the police! Now, as we know, the State monopoly on vodka has been done away with. At first it will be extremely difficult to make up for the loss of revenue, but ultimately the wise action of the Tsar and his advisers will bring its own reward. The increased earning capacity of the people will more than compensate for the temporary deficit; millions of working days will be saved, and it is not too much to say millions of lives also, in the years to come, that otherwise would have been irretrievably lost through the curse that has so long afflicted the people.

Some of the gardens, illuminated with small lamps, are simply a reproduction on a slightly smaller scale of the mild festivities which used to enliven Earl's Court and the "White City" in London. There are the same "joy wheels," "flip-flaps," "toboggan

hills," and other absurd but ingenious devices for the entertainment of the crowd. At one of these places I saw a rehearsal of the play, "*1812*"—quite interesting, but it was curious to see that many of the leading parts were taken by women. The piece seemed spoiled by the introduction of so much of the feminine element. When old Koutosoff, the terrible Scythian leader, gave his orders in a rough, deep, manly voice, one felt the sense of reality and appreciated the dramatic effect; but when the young officer who received the commands answered in a squeaky, girlish tone, the result was not at all congruous to the supposed surroundings of battlefield or military camp. The rounded, plump forms of the women squeezed into the tight-fitting uniforms of men looked ridiculous, and hardly decent. A more pleasant interlude came when the water-nymphs, wood sprites and wild animals held a conclave to inquire what the strange intrusion into their domains could mean. The scene with the *roosalke* (nymphs), probably introduced to break the grim tragedy of the play, certainly suited the women better than men, for it was full of grace, beauty, romance and fantasy. This, however, was spoiled again when the composer time after time stopped the progress of the piece and made the lovely water-nymphs begin their parts once more. One should not attend rehearsals if one wishes to enjoy a play!

XX

CONCERNING THE BALLET

During the reign of Nicholas I. the Petrograd ballet attained a very high level of excellence. Like his father, Paul, the "Iron Tsar" was exceedingly fond of this entertainment, and, if report be true, was not wholly indifferent to the charms of the artists. These were the days of Didlo, Taglione, Fanny Elser, Greze and many other famous ones, and some assert that the Russian ballet then reached its acme of efficiency and perfection; since that time, they say, the choreographic art has declined continuously.

Fanny Elser, the beautiful Viennese, who took the capital by storm, and who is said to have been the ruin of Napoleon's only son, the Duke of Reichstadt, was the favourite of all. Her benefit nights in Moscow and Petrograd were great events, bringing her fabulous sums of money, and causing much scandal to centre in the booking-offices of the Imperial Theatre. On one of these occasions a duel almost occurred between two ardent officer admirers who quarrelled over a ticket of admission. Another balletomaniac, a wealthy gold-mine proprietor, gave Fanny Elser one thousand roubles (£100) for each box he took. "One might well pay more—she is worth it," he observed. Other enthusiasts went still further, and many men quite lost their heads over the Viennese and paid dearly for their folly. In Moscow her reception was tremendous, but space will not permit an enumeration of her conquests or a description of the extravagance of her devotees. They made themselves so notorious that an order came from the authorities in the capital to

the police of Moscow to draw up a report of the eccentric actions of her admirers. Even in the days after she had accomplished the downfall of the Duke of Reichstadt the story goes that she was so interesting that an Englishman travelled all the way by coach from Paris to Vienna simply to see this remarkably seductive woman, who played such havoc with the impressionable hearts of men in every grade of society.

Charlotte Greze was another favourite, a splendid classical dancer with a very finished technique. It has been truly said by an authority on the subject that the Russian dancers not only equalled their foreign instructors, but in some directions surpassed them. Had all the money lavished in Russia on this art been expended in London, we should probably have had by now the finest established ballet in the world, despite the fact that the English are neither so musical nor so fond of dancing. Money attracts talent, and in course of time London, with its vast cosmopolitan population, would have become fascinated. It is curious that the love of dancing, once so strong in France and Italy, should have been transported now to the colder lands of the north. So passionately is it seated in the Russian people that the greatest composers—Tchaikoffsky, Glazoonoff and others—have not thought it beneath their dignity to devote years of labour to the composition of ballets and ballet music.

Until recently, the principal artist in this profession was Khesinskaja, who possesses great force, a fine technique and striking vivacity. This lady, whom I often met, is a great favourite in the highest circles, both for her talent and her common-sense and agreeable manner. Her palace on the Karmennyostroffsky Prospekt, presented to her by the Tsar, is a model of good taste and skilful arrangement, and is said to have cost R.1,500,000. Her diamonds and other jewels are of immense value, as I can attest.

Preobrashenskaja was considered the finest lyrical artist in Russia. She was only in London for a short time, but is a highly educated and most amiable lady, fitted to move in any society. Her charm, good nature and natural grace made an impression on me which I shall not soon forget. These two ladies, as a rule, only dance now by special Imperial request. Pavlova, who is much younger, is probably the greatest ballerina of the coming age. Experts hold that she has every chance of becoming the first dancer in the world, if she has not already attained that honour. She is so well known in London that I need not enlarge on her gifts or her appearance.

Two more famous artists are Sjedova and Karsavina, the former better known in Paris than in this country. All those I have mentioned have the right to a decoration in diamonds, only permitted to be worn by the cream of the profession. There are only six, I believe, thus distinguished in the Imperial ballet. Among the notable male dancers we have Nijinsky, Andrianeff, the brothers Kozleff, Mordkin and Leontieff. Some of them belong to Moscow, but most have passed through the Petrograd School of the Ballet. It is strange, when we think of the warm welcomes these people have received in London and their high remuneration on foreign tours, what a permanent fascination Petrograd has for them. Probably the small importance attached to convention in that easy-going city has a great deal to do with it. The last time I saw Karsavina, who was then staying in England, I asked her how she liked London after Petrograd. She replied that with its fogs and narrow streets it could not be compared with the northern city. To tease her I said: "But there is no doubt that London is the hub of the universe, and for its size one of the healthiest places in the world, while Petrograd is only fit to be inhabited by frogs, snipe and wild

duck!" "What do you know about wild duck?" she rejoined. "Ah, a good deal," I said; "in my time I have shot many." "Not wild duck, but *tchoochela*," she mischievously retorted—*tchoochela* in Russian meaning decoys. This little anecdote I give merely to show how the Petrogradians love their city in spite of all its drawbacks. It has a charm of its own, very hard to explain or describe, which grows on all who know it almost imperceptibly. The free-and-easy life and the hospitality of its inhabitants have much to do with this attraction, in my opinion, and the comparative ease with which a fortune can be made is another factor to its credit—notwithstanding the numerous saints' days and holidays that sprinkle the Russian calendar.

Some of the ballerinas become, as I have already said, the mistresses of persons in high positions—even the morganatic wives of the Grand Dukes, with the knowledge and consent of their legal wives, who in Russia are neither so jealous nor so exacting as English partners. One of the most beautiful and attractive women I ever met was the daughter of a well-known Grand Duke and a celebrated danseuse. She was fair, with golden hair and blue eyes, voluptuously proportioned—a regular *roosalka*, or water-nymph. Her mother's apartments were opposite the Grand Duke's palace, near the English Quay. An old professor who used to visit the palace and dine there states that whenever the lady wished to see her Imperial admirer she would place a small lighted taper in her window. His adjutant had orders that when this signal appeared he was to report a fire—the Grand Duke taking a great interest in conflagrations. One day the usual report was given; the taper burned steadily like a star in this naughty world, and the lover was at dinner with the Grand Duchess. "Your Highness, there is a fire!" said the adjutant,

saluting. The Grand Duchess, however, who had discovered the trick, laughingly remarked : " There is no need to hurry—it is only a farthing candle in a blaze ! " We are not told the reply, but probably the " flame," when next she desired the presence of her admirer, resorted to some other stratagem.

It was in the Kononoff Theatre, on the Moika (mainly devoted to the drama), that Laurence Irving, who was then studying Russian with the object of entering the diplomatic service, first displayed such exceptional talent in *David Garrick* that he was advised to abandon his intended career and take up the stage seriously. The evidences of his gifts for drama were clearly shown while he was attending the Shakespearean classes of the popular Professor Charles Turner, Lector of English Literature at the University of Petrograd. Young Irving, whom I often met at these gatherings, always attracted my especial attention by the striking melancholy of his expression ; his pallid cheeks and flashing eyes, heightened in effect by his thick dark hair, seemed to suggest that he was no ordinary personality, and I wondered what part in life he was destined to play—little dreaming that his end would be so sadly early and so tragic, in the waters of the Atlantic. But how or when our fate comes matters very little if we can meet it with the spirit in which he passed to his death on the *Titanic.*

The Mariensky, the most important though not the largest theatre, is the home of opera and ballet. It might be termed the Covent Garden of the capital, for here the greatest singers, dancers and musicians have made their debut. The boxes and seats cannot be engaged *ad libitum*, as in the other theatres, for most of them are in the hands of life-long subscribers, who obtain them as a favour ; either that, or they are handed on from friend to friend. One of my

intimate relations, for instance, owed his *loge* to the influence of a celebrated ballerina, whose receptions are attended by Grand Dukes, Ministers and leading men. If charm, a lively and engaging disposition, strong common-sense and perfect naturalness are commendable, I, who have spent many hours in this lady's society, can well understand why her *salon* is so frequented. Her jewels are worth a fortune, and she owns a palace decorated with exquisite taste.

In order to raise money for charitable purposes, a tax of two copecks (½d.) is levied on every ticket up to a shilling in value, and five copecks (about 1d.) on all over that price. This is common to all places of amusement, and the large amount derived from this source goes to institutes which support a great many hospitals, schools and charitable bodies.

Enormous prices are paid for such *loges* as happen to be free, especially when artists such as Mazini, Andrade or de Reszke appear; three or four pounds, or even more, for a very poor position, is often given. No expense is spared to make the theatres equal to those of Paris, London or Berlin. The modern ballet in Russia owes its success and prestige partly to the millions that have been lavished on this enchanting form of art, partly to the untiring energy of M. Petit Pas, the great French *maître de ballet*, whose sympathetic and beautiful daughter was for years the favourite of Petrograd society. M. Pas was Master of the Imperial Ballet for sixty years, and during his career staged 150 pieces, most of which had five or six acts; under his expert direction the ballet attained almost to perfection, even eclipsing that of Paris and Milan. The theatres, then as now, were under the control of a prominent official called the Director of the Imperial Theatres, a post generally occupied by some person of the highest rank. Under Prince Usupoff's rule in this capacity a ballerina

received annually R.6500 (£650), others having sums little less—pay which in those days was considered magnificent, since the purchasing power of the rouble was probably four times what it now is. Judging from the enormous salaries paid to foreign talent, theatres continued to prosper during the reign of Alexander I. The danseuse Dupor from Paris, for example, received for each repertoire £120, equivalent to 100,000 francs a year. Thanks to the constant encouragement of the Government and the wealthy classes, the Russian ballet, instead of the most primitive, became the finest in Europe, and Petrograd finally shone as its chosen home. Has it not given us Pavlova, Mordkin, Karsavina and many more whose names are now familiar to all? Of these beauteous ones who have danced their way to fame, perhaps the Polish artist, Lydia Kjasht (or Kyasht, as London spells her), who married a Russian officer of the Guards, was the real pioneer of the ballet in England. It was, in fact, an English merchant of the capital, a near relation of mine, who discovered this new star and persuaded her to try her fortune in London. Through his interest with the theatrical managers he procured for her an engagement, besides making it easy for many other Russian artists of merit to obtain a trial in our own prosaic metropolis, and his efforts as a patron are immensely appreciated by all who have benefited. Lydia Kyasht, who in Russia was then a rising dancer, but not yet "an artist of merit" (the highest title to which a ballerina can aspire), became so successful, as we know, that her example was soon followed by others, to the surprise and delight of all lovers of beauty and the poetry of motion.

For nearly two hundred years Petrograd has possessed a School of the Ballet, founded by the Empress Anna in 1739, its first director being M. Landé, of Paris, who was then celebrated. This institution,

continually supported and favoured by the Court, has produced many splendid artists, and has promulgated traditions and ideals which render its public exceedingly difficult to please. Among this hypercritical, spoilt audience Miss Maud Allan, it may easily be imagined, found small appreciation when she thought to gain fresh laurels. Judging from the critiques that appeared in the Russian Press, the English "barefoot" (*bosonoshka*), as she was called, would perhaps have been wiser to stay at home. The Russian Press is not lightly shocked, but the *New Roos* and other Petrograd productions made some most ungallant remarks about our fair countrywoman, which I will not repeat *in extenso.* The sum total of them was to the effect that Miss Maud Allan stood then on the very threshold of her career, and had a great deal to learn before she attempted to educate the people of Petrograd. Since then she has made much progress, possibly in part owing to the exposure of her deficiencies by these critics, who knew more about the intricacies of the ballet than about their Bibles. The comparison may stand, for one might almost think, from the awe in which the ballet is held, that it was some form of religion, whose exponents were priestesses of the temple. Miss Duncan, who also astonished the city by her capers, met with much more success, perhaps because she was more original. For a long time, however, she was mercilessly caricatured, and formed a source of merriment and satire for the citizens, who give as much attention to a dancer as we in England do to a noted sportsman or athlete.

The influence of famous danseuses and artists in Russia has been immense in politics and diplomacy, as I have suggested. The book, *Woman in History*, has yet to be written—it will be a large one, in several big volumes, and Russia will take up much space in its chronicles. The adventuresses of the land have often

flown at dukes, princes, counts and nobles, but it is seldom that they have aspired, as did Madame Chevalier, to get an emperor into their power. While I was in residence more than one ministerial career was ruined by the intrigues of actresses and dancers, generally of foreign origin.

Most of the actresses appearing at the Russian Imperial Theatre pass through the Imperial School already mentioned, or through the Theatrical School, where they receive a first-class education, at the expense of the Government. Dancers, singers, actors, musicians and even the chorus girls are in the regular pay of the Government, and receive a pension on retiring from the stage.

It seems that the Slavs were always musical. One Byzantine historian records that they were so absorbed in the delights of singing that their camp was once easily surprised by the Greeks. This was in A.D. 592, and this intense love of music is as strong to-day. The father of Peter the Great, Alexis Mechailovitch, was the first Tsar to encourage the arts. In 1660 he ordered an Englishman in his service to engage "master glass-blowers and engravers, and master makers of comedies." Later on, as we have seen, other rulers encouraged the love of song that wells up like a never-failing spring from the hearts of the people.

XXI

THE HERMITAGE AND ITS MEMORIES—CATHERINE'S FAVOURITE RETREAT

On the right-hand side of the Palace Square, adjoining the Winter Palace, is the Imperial Hermitage, the favourite retreat of Catherine II.—called by her admirers Catherine the Great and by her enemies Catherine the Bad. Whichever adjective we may choose, there is little doubt that she was one of the most remarkable women of the time. The daughter of a Prussian general and a Princess of Anhalt Zerbst, therefore certainly a pure German, she initiated that great Panslavistic movement which will doubtless contribute to the aggrandisement of Russia and help to make her the first power in Europe. Nicholas I. tried to follow in Catherine's footsteps and to make himself the head of Balkan Christians, but owing to the opposition of England, France and Turkey, his plans came to grief, and this proud and reserved monarch, who has been much misrepresented in England, either committed suicide or died of grief and mortification.

The Hermitage has the largest of all the numerous art collections of Petrograd—in fact there is so much to be seen that it is not possible to appreciate it all in a single day. This beautiful store of pictures, marbles, cameos and other works of art was begun by Catherine, who laid its foundations of marble and granite, and enriched it by securing the picture collections of Du Chaillet, Bralja, Valona, de Condé, Robert Walpole and many valuable specimens from the Flemish Schools of Art. It is especially rich in Rembrandts,

The Façade of the Imperial Hermitage, the favourite retreat of Catherine II

Teniers and the works of Paul Potter. The Italian School is also well represented by the works of Guido Reni, Carazze, Canaletto, Paul Veronese and other masters. There are many Vandykes which Catherine herself obtained from England, owing to her friendship with an English duchess who had been tabooed in English Court circles.

Here also are the portraits of Lord Philip Wharton, Queen Henrietta Maria, Charles I. and the Holy Family — purchased for £1600; also several rare pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds, with a fine portrait of Oliver Cromwell.

Room 8 contains some splendid specimens from Rafael's palette. Among these we may mention "The Madonna with the Book," "The Madonna Alba" —purchased for £14,000—"St George," and several other portraits by the great masters. Those who would like to form an idea of the countless treasures to be found in this temple erected to the glory of the arts (and to satisfy Catherine's vanity) should turn to their guide-books, where further particulars will be found. I was much impressed with the rare armour dating from the Middle Ages, and the Scythian and Sarmatian jewellery found in the Crimea and in Southern Russia. This district was formerly colonised by the ancient Greeks, whose most skilled artisans and craftsmen used to work for the old Scythian kings, many of whom have been buried in the Chersonese. Greek and Roman cameos are also very plentiful, and beautiful statuary, which, to please Catherine's taste, was made as near to nature as possible, also abounds.

I was particularly struck by the unusual quantity of Varangian (Viking) arms, ornaments and ring money, discovered by Russian archæologists in the old Rūs Viking settlement around Lake Ladoga and Novgorod. This collection is far more valuable and rich than that to be found in the British Museum,

which is very poor in Viking remains, although England, Scotland and Ireland were settled and colonised by the Norsemen. On expressing my surprise, the Public Curator, Mr Troinetsky, who showed them to me, increased my astonishment by stating "that it was nothing compared to the collection to be found in the cellars of the Hermitage."

The walls of this palace conceal many secrets. It was here that Catherine had her famous Winter Gardens, when she relieved the burdens of office by amusing herself with masquerades, at which she appeared in disguise and made herself known to many who on other occasions would have been too bashful to return her advances. Here it was that she gave splendid banquets to her chosen friends and lovers—Potemkin, Orloff and others, who were invited as long as they were in favour. Many men of genius attended her receptions and enjoyed her bounty. Wit, beauty and genius could always gain admission, for although Catherine loved pleasure, she was perhaps equally devoted to the Muses. In order to show her interest in the theatre, she wrote several plays on the founding of Russia by Ruric, Sineus and Truvor, and the exploits of Oleg (Norse, Olaf), who first conquered Constantinople and hung his shield on its gates about a thousand years ago. These plays were written "after the manner of William Shakespeare," for whose works Catherine evidently had the most profound admiration. Here Catherine, when not occupied in looking after State affairs, spent much of her leisure. She superintended the collecting of gems, cameos and pictures. At her receptions, which cost millions of roubles, wine flowed like water, and all the young nobles flocked to the gay Court of the Semiramis of the North. Providing they were handsome and witty, everything was placed at their disposal.

Married to a drunkard who kept a kennel of fox-

hounds in her ante-chamber, and threatened her with imprisonment in a nunnery for life (a fate peculiarly terrible for a woman of Catherine's taste), it is not surprising that she soon found someone to rescue her from a dangerous and unenviable position. No matter how bad or how good a beautiful woman may be, she will always find someone to pity her, especially when mated to a brutal husband. Catherine, who was neither pre-eminently good nor bad, soon discovered a means of deliverance from the society of her wretched partner, who was eventually assassinated by her admirers and sympathisers in the palace of Ropcha. She then ascended the throne, with the help of a coterie of brilliant and unscrupulous men, who committed untold crimes in her name, for which she is unfortunately too often held responsible by historians who were not acquainted with her precarious and peculiar position.

From that time she was ruled by a succession of able and unscrupulous ministers who would have soon treated the "German Usurper" as mercilessly as they did her husband had she not propitiated them with enormous largesses and carried out the policy they dictated. The so-called comedy presents the great Empress as she actually was. Henceforth she will appear in the light of modern history as "more sinned against than sinning," with all those intellectual and *spirituelle* qualities which, in a more healthy atmosphere, would have made her not only one of the most remarkable women of her time, but also one of the best. Forbidden to marry the only man whom she really loved, she endeavoured to find in the favours of a score of lovers that satisfaction which a virtuous woman should only find in one. Her life, when probed to the core, is in reality one long-drawn-out tragedy, and shows all the mischief that can ensue for misplaced affection and wasted talent. Poor Catherine was not

even permitted to live respectably, and when she wished to marry Alexis Orloff, the handsome guardsman, she was informed by Panin, her Chancellor, that "Madam Orloff could never become the Empress of Russia!" One of the members of the Senate was even still more brutally outspoken, and voiced the general opinion concerning her future conduct in the following speech:—"We are delighted to see our Sovereign selecting subjects on whom to confer the favour of her affection, but we can never consent that men who are socially no more than our equals should presume to become our masters!" Catherine was not long in taking this hint, and since she was not permitted to marry either Poniatowski, the King of Poland, or Orloff, she endeavoured to drown her sorrow and regrets in the wildest dissipation, giving full play to her neurotic and passionate temperament, which, like a mighty torrent diverted from its proper channel, flowed in wasteful profusion in all directions. Potemkin, who actually ruled Russia, continually discovered for the Empress fresh admirers, and was rewarded with palaces, estates, territories and millions of roubles in this questionable *métier*.

The Orloff brothers, who, with the aid of the Guards, had secured her nomination to the throne, were rewarded for their "affection" and loyalty with seventeen millions of roubles (£3,400,000); also with estates as large as provinces and thousands of serfs. Notwithstanding her licentiousness, her extravagance and fickleness, there is evidence to show that she not only longed for a better life, but was to a great extent what circumstances and her peculiar temperament made her. In the plays, poems, diaries and other literary memoirs she has left, we can see the real Catherine better than in the narratives of many historians. She not only aspired to be a literary woman, but cultivated the society of some of the most eminent literary men of

her day, including Grimm, Diderot and Rousseau. The costly manuscripts, books, cameos, statues and pictures she collected around her in the Hermitage are evidence of her innate love for all that was beautiful and refining. With all her frailty, she was not so bad as is generally believed. To Poniatowski, whom she really loved, she wrote: "I feel the power over me of the man whom I love; may God preserve you for me, I shall be a better woman." A woman who could write thus could not be wholly bad. "Calumny," wrote the French Ambassador, "has not spared her moral character, but it must be allowed that while not entirely above reproach, she was far from the excesses of which she was accused." Concerning Gregory Orloff, the same Ambassador is far more scathing in his remarks.

In Francis Gribble's *Comedy of Catherine II.* further interesting particulars concerning Catherine will be found.

After spending a week or more in revelry and dancing, she used to have qualms of conscience. Although brought up in strict Lutheran surroundings, during her sojourn in Russia she had put off her early creed and become a zealous Orthodox Christian and a strong supporter of the Church and priesthood, on which she lavished much treasure, in the shape of costly jewels, icons and ecclesiastical ornaments, probably as a kind of insurance premium against the possibility of eternal fire, which she only very vaguely believed in at all. In fact at heart Catherine was a thorough heathen. She admired Voltaire, with whom she corresponded regularly and quarrelled repeatedly. On the other hand, Voltaire was not averse from friendship with this beautiful and witty patron, and in return received many marks of favour in the shape of jewels, pearls and diamonds and pieces of gold coin. Voltaire, however, could never be induced to reside

in Petrograd; he said the city "would not suit his health." In the end the two disagreed, and Catherine, after amusing herself with the wit and brilliance of the writer, grew afraid of his liberal and progressive views and forsook both him and his works. Voltaire, who was a cynic, believed that nothing could absolve Catherine from her sins or even ease her conscience from them. She therefore appealed to her chaplain for aid, and after confessing her many lapses from virtue, wrote as follows to her confessor:—"Oh, Adam Vasilovitch, pray for my sin, as I have received absolution." Every time she sinned she made a costly gift to her confessor, so that the more she strayed from the paths of virtue the fuller became the coffers of the Church.

It was but natural that a ruler who spent such a vast proportion of her time in dissipation and pleasure should not be able to attend to serious affairs as much as she ought to have done. The management of the government was taken over by Potemkin and other lovers, with the consequence that at her death it was found that a huge amount of State business had been left undone. As a result of her extravagance a large portion of Russia was scourged by terrible famines, which caused the death of many thousands of people of the peasant class. Sedition and rebellion showed their threatening heads all over the Empire, while, on the Volga, Pugacheff raised the standard of revolt with such success that he almost overthrew the throne of the Tsars, and re-established the old form of government, which consisted of a number of independent republics or grand duchies, each ruled by a Hetman, and in the north by a Grand Duke, whose powers were exceedingly limited.

But after Pugacheff had captured many towns, and had killed many officials and noblemen, he was finally defeated by Colonel Michelsen and brought in a cage

to Moscow, where he was executed. Catherine was delighted at his defeat, and now wished to pass her last days in peace. Although she had led a life of excitement, she died at a ripe old age, beloved by many kindred spirits and hated by millions of old-fashioned Orthodox Russians, who regarded her as a kind of Antichrist or the "Scarlet Woman" of Revelation.

In spite of all Catherine's weaknesses, however, she had her good qualities. Millions were spent in beautifying her two capitals—with palaces, churches and public buildings. Yet the provinces were terribly neglected, and many of her subjects heaved a sigh of relief when she went to her last account. But in judging her we must remember that for the greater part of her reign she was under the influence of unscrupulous adventurers, or ambitious statesmen and soldiers who would not have hesitated a moment in putting her away, as they did her unfortunate and half-mad husband, had she not fallen in with their views. In return for their support Catherine erected costly palaces for each of her lovers in turn, and in addition to the palace she usually gave the courtier a grant of several million roubles and several thousand serfs, so that he should better be able to uphold the dignity of his position. I have visited several of these palaces in the interior, and was astonished at Catherine's generosity; but then it is so easy to be generous with other people's money, and "Catherine the Bountiful" forgot all about her humble bringing-up as Princess Anhalt Zerbst. It is estimated that she spent about £80,000,000 over her various lovers, who naturally extolled her beauty and her virtue to the highest heaven.

The people of Petrograd seemed to enjoy themselves just as much as the nobility, even if not in quite such a refined and elegant manner. It is no wonder that Catherine was popular among the classes and the

masses of the capital, who both benefited by her bounty. The Empress was extremely kind to her immediate entourage and very good to her servants. Rising at six o'clock in the morning, when everyone else was sound asleep, she dressed herself in order not to disturb anyone; she lit the candles and heated the stoves. Like the present Emperor, she did not like troubling the servants, and used to say: "We must live and let live."

There are many anecdotes about her kindness to those about her. Dumb animals were fond of her and used to run and meet her without fear, which showed that there must have been something good in this remarkable woman, who unfortunately was seldom able to show her true self to the world. Her courtiers, statesmen, favourites and lovers, many of whom were most unscrupulous men, undoubtedly instigated many of the crimes committed and attributed to Catherine's influence. This is the penalty of being a ruler; but, on the other hand, much of the glory which should go to the men of genius around the Court often reverts to the sovereign.

A splendid statue of Catherine II., with her councillors at her feet, is to be seen in the Great Square on the Nevsky Prospekt in front of the Alexander Dramatic Theatre.

She died on 6th November 1796. If we can believe the rather superstitious chronicles of the time, she had several premonitions of her approaching end some months before. During a thunderstorm, lightning damaged many ornaments in her favourite room, for instance; and in some historical notes published in Paris under the name of Louis XVIII. the author states that she was once compelled by a curious impulse to go to the throne-room, where she saw herself seated on the throne. Once, when setting out to attend a ball of Count Samoileff, she saw a bright meteor fall behind her carriage. On the next day she

"BABOOSHKA" EKATERINA II:
"GRANDMOTHER" CATHERINE IN LATER YEARS

remarked to her companion, Countess Matushka: "Just such an omen, the falling of a star, heralded the death of the Empress Elizabeth, and this foretells my end." A few days before the end she spoke much about the death of other monarchs, and of her own also, to Narishkin. "Was this not a premonition?" he asked. Subsequently Perekooseka and Zotoff, gentlemen of the bed-chamber, stated that after rising as usual about seven A.M. the Empress said: "Now I am about to die," and added, pointing to the clock: "See—for the first time it has stopped!" A watchmaker was summoned, and the clock had started again. "Thou seest!" exclaimed Catherine, and gave him 20,000 roubles, adding: "This is for thee!" After this she drank two large cups of strong coffee, joked with Perekooseka and went into her cabinet, occupying herself with her usual work. This was at eight o'clock. At ten the attendants grew alarmed at her prolonged absence, opened the door and saw her lying extended on the floor. In horror Perekooseka and her lover, Zotoff, lifted her and placed her on a mattress, summoning Dr Richardson, her English physician, who bled her and placed Spanish fly blisters on her feet; but she did not recover consciousness. He then twice applied hot irons to her cheeks, but without avail. For thirty-six hours she fought with death. Perekooseka would not leave her, and the doctor kept changing the bandages and wiping away the foam that gathered on her lips. Only a slight movement betrayed that she still lived. Towards nine o'clock the following day her breathing became more feeble, and, with a last sigh, the Empress expired at 9.55 P.M.

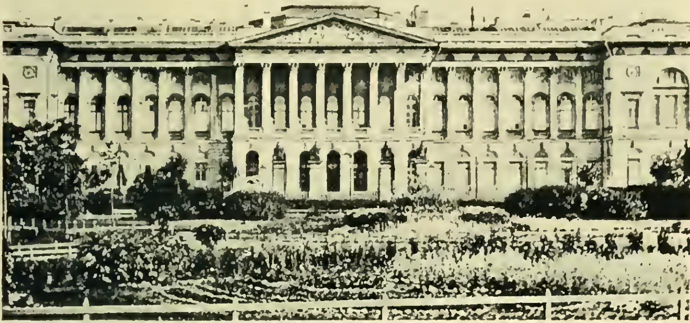
Thus ended the career of a woman whose life was more astounding than many a fairy tale. Who could have thought that the daughter of a petty German princess and Prussian general would rule over the greatest empire in the world, and add so greatly to its fame?

XXII

THE ANITCHKOFF PALACE AND A NARROW ESCAPE

Of all the Petrograd palaces none is associated with so many memories as this, the favourite residence of the Tsar. Many a time have I entered its well-guarded precincts to visit the late Charles Heath, the companion of Alexander III., and tutor of the present Emperor. Mr Heath was a burly Englishman, beloved by all who knew him. He was promoted to the honorary rank of General and presented with many Russian decorations for his long and faithful service to the royal family—with whom he was intimate for many years as a member of the household. An Oxford man, he was a first-class sportsman, and used to accompany the last Emperor in his excursions among the Finnish skerries. All formality vanished, and to their infinite relief the Imperial personages became ordinary mortals on these occasions. They would leave the yacht and picnic in the forests, or on some little island where they were safe from intruders, and from the perhaps more worrying attentions of their retinue of servants and the endless etiquette of the Court, which must have been simply maddening to a man of Alexander's simple tastes. Each one would perform some little duty contributing to the general welfare. Often, I believe, Mr Heath cooked the meat, while the Empress attended to the potatoes, and the Tsar, if I remember rightly, like most men, was fond of managing the fire. Probably these interludes of boating, fishing and sport formed the happiest days spent by the late Tsar and his intimates.

Mr Heath's water-colours of the district still fetch



The Mechailoff Palace, now converted into the Museum of Alexander III

The Anitchkoff Palace on the Nevsky: the Tsar's favourite residence

high prices. His wife and daughter were also talented artists. For many years he had apartments within the palace grounds, artistically furnished and full of costly souvenirs and marks of the esteem in which he was held by his friends at Court. His autograph-book contained, among various distinguished signatures and writings, this quotation written and signed by the present Tsar: "To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man." I knew that Catherine admired Shakespeare, but that the Tsar had so felt his magic was a revelation. In Russia, however, our greatest poet is more read even than in England, especially by the aristocracy and the middle classes. I have met Russians who could recite whole pages from the plays, but on this theme I may have more to say later on.

For years I used to visit the Anitchkoff Palace regularly. On one of the last occasions the obtuse sentry at the entrance—a raw moujik—on my asking for General Heath, directed me to an underground passage leading beneath the palace. Thanks to the potent words, "General Hees," which was as near as the soldiers could get to the name of the tutor, I passed the first guard at the beginning of the passage; but when I reached the middle of the central block I was stopped by two sentries with fixed bayonets, who demanded the password. My only resource, "General Hees," did not suffice, and I seemed in danger of being run through on suspicion of being a Nihilist. Perceiving that I was no Pravoslavny—Russian subject—but a foreigner of some kind, the soldiers spared me the fate my carelessness deserved, and told me not to move from the spot until a messenger had fetched Mr Heath to prove my identity. That gentleman, who at the very moment was engaged in teaching two of the young Grand Dukes, hurried down in a great state of agitation, and after he had ener-

getically blown me up for trying the forbidden entrance, and let off steam in general, I inquired what he was afraid of. When he observed that for all he knew it might have been someone with a few pounds of dynamite bent on sending them all sky-high, I laughed hugely. Yet such a thought was quite natural to one who constantly lived near the Tsar's person, in danger of sharing a fate more than once intended for the last two monarchs. This little adventure taught me to have a great respect for sentries, especially those posted at Imperial residences, fortifications or powder magazines. The men on guard know only one word —*Prekazano* (It is ordered)—and never reason for themselves or allow that there may be circumstances in which blind obedience can be as disastrous as downright disobedience. As the majority of them are exceedingly ignorant, almost unable to read or write, it is always best not to linger near any public building that happens to be guarded, and when ordered by one of those watch-dogs of the Tsar to move on, strangers should do so immediately, without staying to argue or explain.

Through neglecting this rule a near friend of mine was almost killed. The incident occurred at Cronstadt, just before the outbreak of the Turkish War, when feeling against England ran very high in Russia. My friend, who had lived in the country for years, was watching a burning building, when a sentry told him to go away, raising his musket almost at once, as if to strike. Mr X., as I will call my friend (who is still a well-known man in Russia), having been taught boxing, lifted his hand to parry the expected blow. The dense sentry, mistaking the action and imagining he was about to be attacked, felled the trespasser to the ground with the butt of his rifle. I was standing close by with Colonel M'Swiney of the Indian army and Maurice Fitzgerald, son of an Irish bishop.

We rushed to the rescue, and pulled our senseless comrade from beneath a fire-cart. The Colonel, who was a hot-blooded Irishman, immediately complained to the commandant of the troops surrounding the blazing building, who increased our dismay by informing us that the soldier would most likely be punished, not for striking Mr X., but because he had not done his work properly and used the bayonet!—asserting that as my friend had struck the sentry this was simply his duty. This could have been only a surmise, for he had not been present at the spot when the incident occurred. As may be imagined, the answer did not turn away wrath. When our large-hearted, impetuous chaplain heard of the affair he was wildly indignant and sent a formal complaint to the English consul, who at once placed the account before Lord Dufferin, at the time our excellent ambassador. He, not one to leave the wrongs of a British subject unredressed, acquainted the Government at home with all details. Then, as luck would have it, the Russo-Turkish War broke out, and both irate Commandant and thick-headed sentry were sent, with thousands of others, to fight the unbelievers.

For two years the war continued, and I and my friends had almost forgotten the evening of the fire—yet Mr X. was under supervision of the police for all this time, not allowed to leave the country. At the conclusion of the hostilities the Commandant and the sentry returned to their quarters at Cronstadt, and, as the English were still unpopular, this old case was raked up. Mr X. was commanded to appear before the Petrograd High Court of Justice on the grave charge of "striking a sentry on one November night before the war." Knowing he was innocent, my friend at first did not mind; but when he came to look up his witnesses for the defence, he found that with one exception—a little German from the Baltic

Provinces—they were far away. Some were even in India. The officer, evidently a revengeful character, had drawn up a lengthy indictment, and things looked decidedly black. The charges were supported by half-a-dozen witnesses, who probably had been bribed into giving false testimony. In Russia the penalty for striking a sentry on duty is one of two terrible alternatives—death, or Siberia; so the reader may imagine our trouble at this sudden crisis. All seemed lost, when Maurice Fitzgerald, who was then a Professor at King's College, Belfast, heard of the case, and, generous as ever, hastened to Russia to save the situation. His ready wit and good humour worked wonders. When asked where he was just before coming to see the fire on that evening so long before, he replied: "At church," and made an excellent impression. The judge argued that these young men must have been sober if, previous to the outbreak of the conflagration, they had attended divine service, not knowing that we had been *on* the church, watching the fire from the summit of the tower! "Do you ever drink, Mr Fitzgerald?" inquired the judge. "Yes, your Excellency," replied the Irishman, with a twinkle in his eye, "I drink; but I never get drunk." This reply greatly tickled the judge, and put him in a more amiable frame of mind. When the counsel for the defence began to cross-examine the poor soldier, who was scared badly at the serious turn such a trifling affair had taken, the man prevaricated, contradicted himself and finally broke down. The old Commandant, enraged at seeing his principal witness fail thus, made an exhibition of himself when his turn came, and in confusion said: "Kindly excuse me, your High-born Excellency, for I received a contusion in the war which caused me to forget the more minute details not mentioned in the indictment." This general collapse saved my friend Mr X., and he

left the assembly amid applause from the chief members of the English colony, who had gathered to hear this interesting trial—which was mentioned in our Parliament. Mr X., cool as a cucumber, in spite of his recent peril, went up to the judge and asked what damages he might claim for wrongful arrest and two years of police supervision. The judge was thunderstruck at the "cheek" of the cold-blooded Englishman, and replied severely: "Young man, your acquittal is your indemnity; be thankful for that—you have had a very narrow escape of being imprisoned or sent to Siberia!" He was right. Had it not been for Fitzgerald, who travelled from Ireland without thought of compensation to stand by his countryman in danger, the case would undoubtedly have gone against us. Not every prisoner finds such a friend, nor is there often at hand an ambassador such as Lord Dufferin, who interested himself in our dilemma, or such an able correspondent as Mr Charles Dobson, who put matters before the public in *The Times*. There is no doubt that England protects her subjects better than any other nation, and only when some unfortunate member of the British Empire gets into a pickle abroad does he fully realise what it is to be able to say the equivalent of the proud: "*Civis Romanus sum.*"

The Anitchkoff Palace is the Tsar's own personal property and is situated on the right-hand side of the Nevsky, close to the Anitchkoff Bridge. Formerly the ground on which it stands was the quarters of the Preobrashensky Regiment. The Empress Elizabeth afterwards purchased this plot of ground and ordered Rastrelli to build a sumptuous palace. On its completion, in 1751, the Empress, who was secretly married to Count Razoomoffsky, presented it to this nobleman. It is generally believed by Danileffsky and other historians that the Princess Tarakanoffva, who

perished in the fortress of Peter and Paul, owing to the perfidy and cruelty of Count Orloff, was the fruit of this marriage. In his thrilling novel, *The Princess Tarakanoffva*, this dramatic episode is treated with great delicacy and with regard for the truth.

The palace was originally very large and three storeys high, but it has been much altered. The side towards the street is exceedingly simple in structure. The garden and out-houses, however, occupied an immense area and stretched from the Grand Sadovaja Street to the Tchernishoff Bridge. On the spot now occupied by the Alexander Theatre there once stood a large pavilion, containing the picture gallery of the Court, while opposite this was the concert-room, where entertainments and masquerades were given. The balustrade that now surrounds the palace is after the design of the Prussian king, Frederick William III., who had an artistic bent.

Razoomoffsky, who died here in 1771, was of humble origin. It is said that he began his career tending sheep on the steppes of Little Russia. He was the son of a simple Cossack and was born in the village of Lemesbach in 1709, in the government of Tchernigoff. His beautiful voice and handsome appearance attracted the attention of the Empress when he was a singer in the Court chapel. Although merely a man of the people, she showered titles and honours on him, afterwards entering into a morganatic marriage with her favourite. He, being a man of great common-sense, never lost his head or became proud or overbearing; he was one of Nature's gentlemen. When sober, his mind was as beautiful as his body, and he was famous for liberality.

It is a curious coincidence that Peter the Great, the Empress's father, should have made a simple woman, the illegitimate daughter of a servant girl, first his mistress and then his wife, and that their daughter, the

Empress Elizabeth, should follow in her father's footsteps and marry the son of a poor Cossack, whose only recommendation consisted of his voice and good looks. But Russians, who are near to nature, do not look on these misalliances as we do. I have known men of the highest rank and position marry women of no better social position than the wife of Peter the Great.

When we remember that William the Conqueror's mother was the daughter of a tanner, and that many of the Norman nobles were no more highly connected, we need not be surprised at the action of Peter and his daughter in thus choosing partners for life, and as both were happy in their choice there is very little about which we can complain.

As might be expected in a man of such humble origin, the Count occasionally took too much to drink, and when in this condition was often rough to his subordinates. The Countess Schouvaloff always attended service and sang the *Te Deum* whenever her husband returned from hunting and had not been beaten by the tipsy Razoomoffsky and his dependents. Such actions as this would seem to be absolutely incredible in our days, but the authenticity of the story is vouched for by the English ambassador in his letter concerning Count Apraxin, whom he called a coward, because Count Razoomoffsky always beat him at table and he did not resent it. The Count, however, did not reside in the Anitchkoff Palace; in 1767 he sold it to the Crown, and from this time it frequently changed hands.

Catherine II., when she was reigning in Russia, presented the same palace to her minister, Potemkin. He, being hard up, sold his gift to the merchant Shemjaken, who in 1759 amassed a fortune by transporting provisions and stores from Petrograd to Pillau for the Russian army when it was engaged in operations against Prussia. Later the palace was partly rebuilt

and adapted to contain the Imperial cabinet or office which has to do with managing the estates, more especially the gold, copper, silver and other mines, numbers of which belong to various members of the Imperial family. The only time I visited this office was to make inquiries concerning a gold mine which an English company promoter asserted he had bought and was taking over. In less than half-an-hour I found that the great "company promoter" was only a very small shareholder and not the owner of the mine at all. I was thus the means of nipping another Stock Exchange swindle in the bud.

On the accession of Catherine Pavlova (on the 12th June 1816) and her second marriage to the King of Würtemberg, the palace came under the Department of the Imperial "Oodel," which has the control and management of the Imperial estates in Russia, Siberia, the Caucasus and other parts of the Empire. Each member of the Imperial family owns a certain number of mines, estates and patents, the proceeds of which go to the person to whom they are apportioned. If these estates, many of which consist of vineyards, tobacco plantations and cotton-fields, are well managed the recipient of the income is well-to-do, but should there be any wastage the Imperial family suffers. Some of the Grand Dukes appear to receive a much greater revenue than others. For example, the late Grand Duke Michael, the Tsar's grand-uncle, had enormous properties in Russia as well as in the Caucasus, from which he derived an income of several millions annually. Other Grand Dukes, who were not so thrifty—in fact were exceedingly extravagant—have had to sell their lands. The latter, however, cannot be disposed of in the same way as an entailed estate in England. The Oodel or Imperial Appanage Department is an old Norse institution and dates[1]

[1] The old name of Russia is Roos, or the land of the Roos or Rūs.

from the Varangian Grand Dukes of old Roos. Many of these were "Oodel Knjazee," or Oodel princes. The last Oodel prince of Russia was Demetry, the youngest son of Ivan the Terrible, who is believed to have been murdered by Boris Godounoff at Ooglitch on the Volga. Whenever a province is conquered a portion is set aside for the Imperial family. This is called the Imperial appanage, and cannot easily be disposed of.

In 1817 the Emperor Alexander I. presented this palace to his brother, the Grand Duke Nicholai Pavlovitch, who resided here until he ascended the throne in 1825, under the title of Nicholas I. This Emperor was exceedingly fond of the palace, and in order to differentiate it from others called it "his own palace." He frequently said that in this building "he had spent the happiest and best years of his life." Even after removing to the Winter Palace, Nicholas every year spent long intervals at the Anitchkoff Palace with the Imperial family. During Passion Week he fasted in the beautiful church with other members of his family. Here he not infrequently was present at the baptism of infants and at the marriage of friends whom he desired to honour. In fact the Emperor was very much attached to the services of the Church, and would himself often take part in them by reading the Psalms or by intoning the Litany. Further light is thrown on the religious character of Nicholas in an excellent work on the Tsar and his Court by John Maxwell of Baltimore.

In 1859 this palace was occupied by the Grand Duke Nicholas Nicholaivitch, whom I met at the military manœuvres shortly before his death. Here he lived for many years, until the residence specially built for this old soldier was ready. His two consuming passions were his love for the ballet and for the army. His talented son, who was also an expert cavalry

general, became Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army in the present gigantic campaign in Poland, where he has astonished most qualified critics by his military knowledge.

The last-mentioned residence, which is exactly opposite the end of the Nicholai Bridge, leading to the city from the Vasilii Ostroff, has now been converted into an institution for orphans, under the patronage of the Grand Duchess Xenia, the Tsar's sister. Many of the palaces of the Grand Dukes are sharing a similar fate, and, as the expense of living increases, are being sold by the owners and converted into military schools, orphanages and hospitals.

The gentle and peace-loving Alexander II., who emancipated the serfs, spent most of his days in the Winter Palace, where he was carried faint and bleeding after the abominable attempt on his life, which unfortunately for the progressive and liberal party in Russia was only too successful; for his son and successor, Alexander III., remembering the murder of his father, not only stopped Russia on the road to liberty and freedom, but also became a strong retrograde and reactionist, which can hardly be wondered at. In the room where he expired are to be seen his blood-stained uniform, his half-smoked cigarette and other silent mementoes of the tragedy. His son hated the place where his father died, and resided in the Anitchkoff Palace, which seems to be the favourite home of the later Romanoff tsars. Here the bluff Alexander III., who was a typical Romanoff as regards strength and sound common-sense, passed many happy days in company with his beloved Danish wife, who was so impressed by her husband's personality that she became a strong upholder of his religion and his political views. This made her extremely unpopular with the revolutionary party, and several attempts were made on her life. It is said that she and several

other members of the Imperial family were condemned to death by the Revolutionary Committee, but as she was not assassinated this rumour may be unfounded. The present Tsar was partly educated there. In this comfortable abode Alexander III. felt at ease, free to live the life that was in accordance with his simple tastes. Many a time he could be seen in the grounds chopping firewood with a huge axe such as only a strong man could wield.

As the Tsar found that the palace at Petrograd was too large for his comfort, he had another built at Alexandroffka, close to the palace of Peterhoff—in reality only a one-storey house, which out of compliment to the Tsar was called a palace. This building was so small that it could be easily guarded by a few soldiers or sentries. It was in the Anitchkoff Palace that Alexander III. fell ill, and grave rumours were circulated to the effect that he had been poisoned. A noted specialist was summoned, but it was too late. Disease had made too much headway for even this excellent physician to cure, and Father John was sent for to administer the consolation of religion to the failing Emperor.

Mr Heath used to tell me that Alexander III. possessed enormous bodily strength. Like Augustus, King of Saxony, he was able to break a horseshoe in his hand or bend a thick silver rouble between his finger and thumb. At the banquets at the palace he would sometimes show his strength by taking one of the gold plates from the table and forming it into the shape of a bouquet-holder, presenting it to one of the ladies present whose appearance pleased him. Unlike Augustus the Strong, the Tsar's private life was exemplary, which cannot be said of all his predecessors.

XXIII

THE TAURIDA PALACE AND THE WINTER PALACE

The Taurida Palace, now converted into the Duma, a magnificent building with one of the most spacious halls of the Continent, was for many years the residence of Potemkin, Catherine's favourite. In 1783 she ordered Ivan Egorovitch Staroff, an eminent architect, to build a palace " after the design of the Pantheon " ; but this command was not very closely followed. The outward appearance is not particularly interesting, for the architect's taste was lavished on the interior decorations, which are in pure Doric style. When completed, it was presented to the glorious " Prince of Taurida "—a title bestowed by the Empress on Potemkin after his conquest of the Crimea. He, continually in want of funds owing to his extravagance and dissipation, sold the palace to Catherine, who promptly presented it once more to its original owner, so that Potemkin again found himself rich. In 1791 the anniversary of Ismail, celebrated by Byron, was commemorated here with notable splendour. According to accounts of contemporary writers, the buildings in front of the palace facing the Neva were pulled down. Potemkin drew up the programme of the festivities, assisted by Dershaven the historian, who composed special songs for the occasion, to be rendered by several choirs of the best singers. Enormous sums were spent. All the wax in the city was bought up for illuminating purposes, and, this proving insufficient, agents were sent to Moscow for more—70,000 roubles went for this alone, equal at the current value of the rouble to about £14,000. For weeks

skilled artists worked on the decorations, and long beforehand numbers of high-born folk assembled there to practise their various parts, each repetition being on so grand a scale that it seemed a special holiday. In this way vanished much of the money Catherine squandered on Potemkin in such profusion. Between the palace and the river, the whole space was occupied by booths, swings, and shops where clothes, boots, caps, etc., were distributed gratis among the people. On her arrival, accompanied by the Imperial family, the Empress immediately ascended the dais prepared for her, and the ballet, arranged by Le Picquet, a famous *maître de ballet* of the day, began at once. Fairies to the number of twenty-four, recruited from noted families, took part, dressed in costumes of white enriched with diamonds. The Grand Dukes Alexander and Constantine, who were to become so well known in Russian history, directed the dancing, assisted by the Prince of Würtemberg, while Picquet performed a remarkable solo act for Catherine's delectation. Three thousand guests were invited, and all appeared in costume. It is said that Potemkin's hat was so heavy with jewels that he was compelled to give it to his adjutant to carry!

The scene was reminiscent of *The Arabian Nights*. Invisible musical-boxes discoursed selections from the best composers, and the most noted musicians and singers, to the number of three hundred, made harmony when these were silent. Lustres of great value adorned several pedestals round the walls. These were of black crystal, and had been purchased from the Duchess of Kingston—famed for her beauty, and for her lawsuit against her husband. Besides these huge lustres, there were in the salon fifty smaller ones, and 5000 lamps of various colours. It is estimated that on this one evening 140,000 lamps and 20,000 wax candles were burning.

The rooms set apart for the use of the Empress were especially luxurious; the walls displayed precious Gobelin tapestry, representing the story of Mordecai and Haman; and in one room was a golden elephant —really a clock—which in 1829 was presented by the Tsar Nicholas I. to the Shah of Persia. The two ballets were *Les Faux Amants* and *The Merchant of Smyrna*; in the second, people of all countries appeared as slaves, with the exception of Russia. As the Empress, who was passionately fond of dancing and masquerades, entered the salon, the opening of the ball was announced by the booming of guns and the strains of a patriotic Polish song.

It would take volumes to describe in detail the extravagance of that entertainment—the beautiful winter garden, a wonder of luxury and of taste, rivalling even that of the Hermitage; the flirtation of the gay ladies and courtiers; the freedom of manners which Catherine encouraged in order to hide her own lapses. Such licence and vicious splendour had hardly been known since the days of the Cæsars. The kiosks, fountains, statues, feasting, the alcoves where lovers might meet undisturbed, called back the olden times of Rome's hey-day.

At midnight supper was begun—the Russians love to turn night into day and thus pass the long winter in gaiety. The table of the Empress and the Court was loaded with golden dishes, and Potemkin himself waited on her. Behind her dais a place was reserved for those taking part in the ballet, and many other tables were spread, over which glowed lamps with globes of tinted glass. Naturally the viands and wine were of the finest, for Potemkin, who had the reckless tastes of a Roman proconsul, spared no expense in obtaining the best. The Empress departed at two in the morning—which, for Russia, is quite early. She was highly pleased with it all, and expressed her hearty

thanks. Potemkin, gallant courtier, knelt at her feet and raised her hand to his lips; it is said that tears stood in his eyes, and that even Catherine wept. Whether this emotion was genuine or not I will leave to the student of history to decide; but, strange to say, not a word of the whole affair was given in *The Government Messenger* of those times. A reason is to be found for this freezing silence in the elevation of another lover, Prince Zooboff, to favour, who had succeeded in supplanting the intellectual and physical giant, Potemkin.

Potemkin never forgot the slight, although Catherine once more visited him. Two months after this visit he quitted the Taurida Palace, and did not set foot within its precincts again. These months were quiet ones, for, now that his mistress had fixed her heart on another, carnivals could no more afford the courtier any satisfaction. The fear of approaching death filled this hardened and worldly man with terror and gloom. When Catherine heard that he lay seriously ill, she showed her sympathy and sorrow by attending the Alexander Nevsky Monastery and presenting the Church of the Annunciation with a large silver reliquary and a golden lamp, also several vessels set with precious stones. On news of his death arriving, she wept, and for days seemed inconsolable. Speaking of him, she said: "He possessed unusual wisdom, a hot temperament, a good heart; he looked like a wolf, and therefore was not beloved, but he bestowed favours even on his enemies. It is difficult to replace him; he was a thorough nobleman, and not to be bought by money or favour." To Prince Eugène of Nassau she wrote: "C'était mon élève; il faisait le bien à ses ennemis, et c'est pour cela qu'il les désarmait."

Potemkin expired on 5th October 1791, on the road from Jassy to his beloved port of Nicholaieff. After going about twenty miles, he ordered his coachman to

stop. "It will do now," he exclaimed; "there is no need to travel—I am dying. Take me out of the carriage; I wish to die in the open field." Thus this giant, who practically ruled Russia, and for a while held Catherine in the hollow of his hand, gave up his saddened spirit. With all his faults, he was a true patriot, living for the glory of his country, even though he benefited thereby indirectly. There is little doubt that he was a man of commanding ability, and his work as statesman and soldier has left its mark on history. In his later years he may well be regarded rather as friend than as lover; as long as he could enjoy the sweets of office and the power of his position he was content to leave the smiles and favours of the Empress to men of smaller calibre and less ambition.

The Taurida Palace, bereft of those who filled its halls with life and song, was like a body without a soul. Slowly it fell into decay, and held only echoes of its former glory. Every spring and autumn the Empress visited this haunt of happy memories, but on her death the Emperor Paul, who hated every place associated with Potemkin, Orloff, Zooboff, and other lovers of his mother, had all the beautiful statuary and ornaments removed to the Mechailoff Castle, his own residence, and the building itself was turned into barracks for the soldiers of the Guard. In addition to this indignity, Paul, to show his detestation of Potemkin, who had injured him in his mother's estimation, gave orders that the courtier's body should be taken from the spot where it rested and be buried "without further pomp" in a hole, with the earth flattened in such a manner as to show no evidence that he had ever existed. What an end to the man who ruled an empire, who spent millions in the endeavour to please his Empress—to to be buried in a hole like a dog, with the ground levelled so that his very existence might be forgotten! There is reason to believe, however, that this decree

was not carried out, for some years later, in the Church of St Catherine at Kherson, remains were found, with a portrait of Catherine set in diamonds, and a coat and slippers once belonging to Potemkin.

In 1802 the Taurida Palace was restored, and in the following year the Emperor Alexander I. made it his abode. In 1829 it became the residence of Hozrer Mirza, the Persian heir-apparent. It has now been given over to the Douma, Russia's first popular representative assembly since the accession of Peter the Great. It still contains many statues, pictures and other relics of magnificence, also a winter garden and an excellent orangery. I have not visited it since its new character of the House of Parliament; the last time I was there was on the occasion of a "Ball of Flowers"—one of the last this classic building knew. Some of Petrograd's fairest danced with me then, and for a short time music and revelry held possession of the immense, beautiful halls; but now all that is past. Henceforth the Taurida will be devoted to far more serious matters—the discussion of ways and means of raising the Empire to the level of other European nations, and of making Russia greater, not only in wealth and resources, but in freedom, refinement and progress; in short, of placing her in the forefront of civilisation.

The first Winter Palace, begun by Peter, was, comparatively speaking, a small building. The Empress Anna Ivanovna, on her return from Moscow, where she had been crowned, stayed in the old palace in December, 1730. On this occasion the whole Court travelled to the city in three days by sledge. From this time the Winter Palace became the principal centre of the Empire, the Kremlin, the ancient seat of Muscovite power, being practically deserted. It soon, however, proved too small for the requirements of the Court, and in 1754 the Empress decided to lay

the foundation of a new edifice. In July the work began; over 140,000 barrels of lime, chalk and other materials were needed, and the building proceeded slowly. There were so many labourers that housing became a problem, and they had to live in earth shelters in the meadows, or in distant parts of the town. Owing to bad food and impure water, hundreds of them died, and sometimes the work came to a standstill for want of funds. Money was so scarce that the Crown often spent only from 40,000 to 70,000 roubles a year instead of 120,000. Rastrelli, the Italian architect, took the suspension of operations so much to heart that he sickened, and his place was taken by Felten.

In 1761, in accordance with a promise made to the Empress, the palace was ready. The following November she gave orders that its great church should be prepared for consecration on the 22nd April; but the royal lady was not destined to behold the full grandeur of the most beautiful architectural achievement of her reign, for she died suddenly on 25th December 1761. The work of adorning it and adding it to the Hermitage was left to Catherine II., who spent a large part of her career in the two buildings. They are connected by a number of passages.

For a short period the Winter Palace became the residence of Peter III., although it was not complete—the whole square in front was littered with timber, bars, and all kinds of rubbish. General Baron Korf, the prefect of the city, ultimately suggested to the Emperor that this waste material should be given to the citizens. The notion pleased the Tsar, who assented immediately, and as soon as his generosity was made known the people thronged the square, picking up and carrying off whatever bits might come in useful for their homes. The scene was greatly enjoyed by the Emperor from the windows.

Peter then took up his quarters in the palace. He was a Lutheran, and refused to witness the consecration of the new church; disliking the Russian form of worship, he could not be persuaded to attend the service. He belonged to the Holstein dynasty, and his unfortunate love for everything German eventually led to his assassination; for the Russian courtiers still hated Prussian ideas, while Peter was bent on forcing his military notions upon them. He also shocked them by neglecting to observe the religious fasts. His wife, Catherine, designing and ambitious, pretended to be a zealous supporter of the Orthodox Church, and so pleasing was her behaviour to the officers of the Guard that when Peter was murdered at Ropcha she was unanimously proclaimed Empress.

Paul I. for some reason never cared to live in the Winter Palace, but built for himself a splendid home, surrounding the boundary with a ditch, in which he set cannon. The place resembled a fortress in the very heart of the city. Here he lived almost alone, as though in a state of siege; but all his precautions could not save the "mad Tsar," and he fell, assassinated by courtiers whose *amour propre* he had offended by his eccentricities and impossible conduct. This palace was at the end of the Summer Garden; it is now converted into a School of Engineers. The new one is at the end of the Mechaileffski, at right angles to the Nevsky Prospekt.

The Emperors Alexander I., Nicholas I. and Alexander II., successors to Paul I., passed much of their lives in the Winter Palace; but after the attempt to blow up the Court, and the murder of Alexander II., who was brought there to die, the magnificent abode was rarely inhabited by the Imperial family. After the explosion—the sound of which, as I have mentioned, I heard—the whole of the enormous structure—it is almost a mile in circumference—was searched by the

police, who made many astonishing discoveries. Among other surprises, they found that mines had been laid in the cellars, also that hundreds of persons were in residence who had no right to be there. Cows and other animals, it is said, were found even on the roof!

One of my best friends, who was also intimate with the late Laurence Irving, was present when the Tsar met his doom. A colonel I knew had his head so injured by flying fragments of the bomb that he was never again any good for active service. As for the Tsar, his lower limbs were shattered, and all he could utter was the words: "To the palace to die." It can hardly be wondered at that, with such terrible memories as this palace harbours, the present rulers of Russia prefer to reside in their less ostentatious home on the Nevsky Prospekt.

XXIV

THE ALEXANDER NEVSKY MONASTERY

At the end of the Nevsky Prospekt—which seems endless—is the Monastery of Alexander Nevsky, built in honour of the brave Grand Duke, descendant of one of those Varangian princes who in the ninth century laid the foundations of the Russian Empire and made Novgorod (Holmgard) their first capital. Although Novgorod was the enemy of Muscovy, Alexander Nevsky is now considered a saint, and his bones are at rest in a shrine of solid silver about two tons in weight, which has been further enriched by all the Romanoff sovereigns since Peter the Great brought the precious relics from Novgorod to his new capital. Raymond Beazeley, Litt.D., in the introduction to his *Chronicles of Novgorod*, published by the British Historical Association in 1914, thus writes of Alexander: "After the intoxicating victories of the Neva over the Swedes (1240) and of Lake Chudskera over the German knights (1242), it was hard to submit to the Mongol taxes as in 1259. But Alexander realised that to defy the Horde was to complete the desolation of Russia. The hero of Novgorod at last persuades her of the humiliating truth. He rides out with the Mongol emissaries, whom he has guarded day and night from mob violence, and under his protection the 'accursed ones' (the Mongols) go through the streets, marking the houses of the Christians. To save the Russian remnant Alexander journeys repeatedly to the western Tartar army (the Golden Horde) upon the Volga. Death overtakes him on his way home from the Golden Horde in 1263. The news reaches Novgorod as the

Eucharist is finishing; turning to the people, the Archbishop Cyril tells the disaster—'The sun of the Russian land has set, my children!' 'Grant, merciful Lord,' exclaims the chronicler, 'that he may see Thy face in the ages to come; for he has laboured for Novgorod and for the whole Russian land.'" Such was the hero and saint whom Peter honoured. The remains were conveyed by land from Novgorod, and then placed on a small vessel on the River Volchoff, whose waters Ivan the Terrible had reddened with the blood of thousands of citizens of the once powerful republic. Thus they floated to Lake Ladoga, and thence to the Neva. At Oost-Ishora, the scene of Alexander's victory, Peter met the procession, placed the relics on his own boat, and himself took the rudder. The Empress, the Court, the priests, and the whole Guard, with crowds of the excited populace, assembled to meet the Tsar, and with his attendants he carried the burden into the Church of Alexander, which had been especially consecrated on this day for the reception of the remains. Peter chose the 30th of August 1724 for this ceremony, the third anniversary of his peace with the Swedes. At last he was happy; his "Paradise" was no longer accursed to all true Russians—for did it not contain the relics of one of Russia's greatest heroes and saints? One who by his wisdom and courage practically saved the nation from extinction and ruin was thus brought to his final rest.

The monastery is supposed to be one of the wealthiest religious houses in the country; its present revenue is over half-a-million pounds a year. During the Crimean War the monks lent the Emperor Nicholas several million pounds; afterwards they laid out huge sums in the construction of large granaries on the Kalaschinkoff Quay, which now bring in a good income. Incidentally I may mention that these granaries are

infested with thousands of enormous rats, which seek the river at night, presumably to quench the thirst induced by the feasts of the day. It is said that a drunken moujik once tried to stop them in their march, and was torn to pieces for his foolhardiness.

Six churches, an ecclesiastical academy, the house of the metropolitan, a seminary for priests and a school are embodied in the monastery, and in its beautiful adjoining cemetery many famous statesmen and writers are buried—among them Glinka, Dostoieffsky, Karamzin the historian, Rubinstein and Tchaikoffsky. About one hundred monks are attached to the place, and I have heard that some rich merchants of Petrograd give large sums to ensure the privilege of passing their last days within the sacred precincts—also that the life they lead there, surrounded by old friends and good books, is not a particularly austere one! An interesting work could be written on this theme. Russia to a great extent is still living in the Middle Ages, and the existence of millions in the interior reminds one more of the days of Chaucer than of the period of Kipling and his contemporaries. The holy friars, the ascetics, the merry monks, the drunken village priests, who relate scandalous stories, all call to mind *The Canterbury Tales*. Not all these ecclesiastical professors are above reproach. The story goes that the monks and nuns in a very noted house near Moscow were so famed for their piety that for a long time they escaped all supervision. Unfortunately for them, the bishop of their diocese happened to pay a visit quite unexpectedly, and entered a section in which they usually held devotions. In one room he noticed an oily liquid trickling from the ceiling, and this led him to make a thorough investigation of the upper storeys. To his surprise he discovered on each side of the upper chamber a secret corridor which passed over the prayer cells. His suspicions still

further roused, he searched these, and found pigment-boxes, face powders and fragrant pomades. It was afterwards found that the trickling liquid originated in a tub of prime butter whose contents had been melted by the heat. The most remarkable discovery, however, was a gramophone, which reproduced songs of such a nature that the cheeks of the worthy bishop blushed scarlet. He was so scandalised that he summoned a special ecclesiastical conclave to discuss the affair, and as a result of its deliberations sixty nuns were expelled. If this particular story is fiction, I have heard many to beat it during my wanderings through Russia.

In the church of Blagovetchesk, belonging to this monastery, are interred the bodies of Natalya, sister of Peter the Great, and Field-Marshal Souvoroff, with many another eminent personage. On Souvoroff's grave is the simple inscription this hero of so many fights desired : "Here lies Souvoroff." Many precious relics, and a huge quantity of jewels, pictures and gems, gifts from the faithful and the repentant to the church and its patron saint, are contained here.

Farther up the river, past the Schlüsselberg Gate, is a cathedral which came into existence while I was in Petrograd. Its origin was curious. One summer day during a heavy thunderstorm the lightning, by a strange freak, struck the metal dish containing a quantity of coins which had been offered to an icon. Several of the smaller ones were embedded in the metal framework of the picture, which, of course, immediately became doubly sacred. The old monk attending at the shrine ran out, crying that a wonderful miracle had occurred—the Almighty, in order to show His favour to this chosen icon, had scattered the money on its frame. This story made a strong appeal to the imaginative and superstitious people, and soon from all parts came crowds to pray before the image.

Several real or imaginary cures took place, and soon the little chapel where the event happened was too small for the worshippers. It was found necessary to build a church, which gradually developed into a cathedral with its adjuncts. And so it stands, in all its glory, and the wonder-working image which brought such luck to the priests is still there, the innocent cause of this unexpected flow of wealth and fortune. I believe that a large number of the monasteries and churches in Russia owe their origin to "miracles" of this kind. In another religious house not far away, near which I lived for a whole summer, the monks, according to the boatmen, who used to ferry them across the river told me, did not deny the flesh at all. After dark the ferrymen take over wine, vodka and other delicacies more exciting than sour cabbage, black bread and cucumbers. All this, again, called to mind the days of Chaucer and Langland, when the priests made merry and lived well, to the scandal of those who imagined that fasting and praying were their chief occupations. But each monastery has its own code of conduct, and it is perhaps better not to pry too closely into these mysteries!

XXV

THE KAZAN CATHEDRAL, THE RIOTS, AND ST ISAAC'S CATHEDRAL

Passing the Imperial Library, one arrives shortly at the Corps de Pages (Pashesky Korpus), a splendid military school which occupies a large area on the banks of the Fontanka. This owes its origin to the Tsar Paul, who was a Knight Commander of the Knights of Malta, and a zealous freemason. He had many good qualities, and still more excellent intentions; but this is not the place to speak of him or them. On the right hand is the "Cathedral of the Kazan Mother of God," and in front, in the large square, are the statues of Koutosoff, the Russian cunctator, and Barclay de Toll, the two chief generals who helped to defeat Napoleon in 1812, and to drive him, baffled, over the frontier. Nowhere in Russia, save perhaps in Moscow, does one see so many mementoes of this disaster. In the cathedral alone there are one hundred and twelve eagles captured from the French army in its retreat, also a considerable portion of the plunder from Moscow, rescued from the French soldiers when they fled in disorder before the raging Cossacks and the fanatical peasants—who regarded the French as the Belgians now regard the Germans. The cathedral also contains the keys of Memel, Berlin and many other European cities occupied by the Russians after that campaign. One of its treasures is the "Iconostase," which divides the principal altar from the body of the church. This beautiful ornament is of pure silver, weighing about forty poods, and is chased in a most intricate manner; it is enriched with many icons

The Kazan Cathedral, which contains the Standards and Plunder captured by the Cossacks from Napoleon's Army in 1812

glittering with rubies, sapphires and diamonds, and was captured by the Don Cossacks and presented by them to the church. The most valuable icon of all, however, is the one from which the cathedral derives its name. The frame alone, containing the image of the Virgin, weighs ten poods (360 lb.), and is of pure gold, inlaid with hundreds of gems. In 1812 Marshal Koutosoff placed the image in his bosom after praying in the church, and set off to take over the supreme command of his country's forces against the "heretical French." Many Russians, especially those of the lower classes, believe that it was only due to the miraculous aid given by the "Holy Mother of Kazan" that he was able to conquer, when all other help had proved vain. When Tochtemish, the Tartar invader, marched against Moscow and the Kremlin, it is stated that by the power of a holy icon borne in solemn procession by the priest round the walls, the Tartars were compelled to retreat. Russian history abounds with instances of miracles and wonderful victories effected in this manner through images of the Virgin Mary and the innumerable saints, and whether or not we believe the faith which millions of the poorer people still have in their icons and sacred relics, it is a great power in the hands of the priests and officials, whenever they make use of it for their own ends. This power, however, does not always avail, and I have myself seen, in a house of one of my friends in the suburbs of London, the very icon the merchants of Kharkoff presented to General Krapotkine when he started on his disastrous expedition against the "little yellow men of the East."

The Kazan cathedral will always be associated in my mind with the great riot that took place in the square on 11th March 1901—an event which I consider as the real beginning of the terrible revolution that for years cast a cloud of misery and despair over

the whole Empire. On that day I was attending service in the American church, and received warning from a student that serious trouble was expected. I immediately hurried to the Kazan Square, and took up a position on the steps of the Domenico Café, exactly opposite the cathedral. I saw no signs of the coming storm, except a small crowd standing under the colonnade, at first; but the square gradually filled with a throng of excited people, as if by some prearranged plan. Many students were there, gesticulating wildly and talking volubly. Suddenly someone began to sing the *Marseillaise*, which the workmen had learned from sailors who had been in France, and this stirring strain, which has inspired so many fighters all over the world, at last roused the attention of the grey-coated police as they paced slowly up and down the broad street and kept order. Every moment the crowd grew more and more excited. Then, without the least warning, General Clayhills, the Prefect of the city, entrusted with almost autocratic powers, drove up in front of the cathedral. I observed that he was also excited, and that he pointed now and then to the people assembled on the steps under the colonnade. He gave several orders to the adjutants standing round him, and these officers immediately disappeared. Seeing that affairs looked serious, I withdrew, and sheltered in a doorway—as it happened, not a moment too soon, for before one could count a hundred a large company of Don Cossacks and mounted gendarmes rushed up from all sides and rode down mercilessly the crowd just in front of me. For twenty minutes or more the air rang with the agonised screams of women and the curses of infuriated men who had been crushed by the wild horsemen of the steppes, or struck down by the terrible *nagaika*—a loaded whip that tears the flesh or cuts like a jagged sword.

Little by little the turmoil subsided. I saw young

men and lady students carried off, bleeding and disfigured; some were even killed outright, others were severely injured by the hoofs of the horses. As soon as I was able to pass the cordon of soldiers that shut off all approaches to the square, I made for a small underground shop in a side street, and there wrote out a detailed description of the affair, which I posted to my agent across the frontier. He at once telegraphed it to London. Thus, despite the vigilance of the censors, who stopped all letters referring to this riot, the incident was known directly afterwards all over Europe.

On making further inquiries, I subsequently found that some hundred persons had been arrested and locked up in the barracks and prisons. Among these were ladies, who had taken no part in the demonstration, but who had merely been guilty of idle curiosity. It was fortunate that I was not with them, for I was just as curious. Some of the people who took part in the tumult—which was attended with loss of life on both sides—were sent to Siberia; others were imprisoned. I remember how one muscular lady student killed a police officer with a hammer; another official was badly wounded with one of the old standards which hang round the walls of the cathedral. One little dreamed that they would ever be put to so novel an employment—as weapons of destruction! The women, being "politicals," were treated with greater severity. As a rule the women demonstrators and "emancipated" females who cause trouble—especially students, who often wear short hair and dress as men—are taken to a police station, where they receive corporal punishment at the hands of women warders, administered on the most sensitive parts of the body.

After this eventful day similar scenes were enacted in Nizhni-Novgorod, Moscow, Kieff, Rostoff and many

other centres. The social revolutionary movement spread rapidly throughout the whole of Russia, and thousands were killed and wounded in encounters with the police, though the censors did their utmost to conceal from the outside world what was happening. After each outbreak the Government spared no efforts or expense to crush the revolution; but it still progressed, until it culminated in the dramatic episodes that followed the Russo-Japanese War in 1906, when Moscow, and even Petrograd, seemed for a time at the mercy of the revolutionists.

During this period all newspapers, books, songs and pamphlets were carefully examined by the censors before publication, and concerts or other entertainments were prohibited unless the police first scrutinised the proposed programme, or an officer was present. Yet, in spite of all these precautions, the secret printing presses managed to do their work. Thousands of inflammatory pamphlets were smuggled over the frontier and distributed broadcast. Gendarmes and police were then armed with revolvers and allowed to use their weapons on the slightest provocation, but these repressive measures did not suffice; and von Ploeve, Minister of the Interior, who had himself been a police officer, spent millions of money in increasing the rural and secret police force. This soon became the most important body in the Empire, with autocratic powers exceeding those of any other State department. Many laws were passed to improve the condition of the manufacturing and agricultural classes, but the disaffection and ill will of the revolting section seemed undiminished, and the prisons became so overcrowded that accommodation for criminals grew scarce. This terrible internal rebellion brought about the assassination of the dreaded von Ploeve, who was blown to pieces by a bomb while driving along the Ismaielsky Prospekt on his way to the station. The

Generals Sacharoff, Bobrikoff, Stolypin and many others in high positions shared a similar fate, but in the end the Government, of course, gained the upper hand. The rebellion, in my opinion, failed rather for the want of capable leaders than for any other reason. The Russian people, accustomed for so long to being governed like children, have not yet developed qualities which fit men to become leaders of their fellows.

The unsuccessful finale of the Japanese War had much to do with kindling the slumbering fires of public feeling against all who were believed responsible for the disasters on land and sea. Should the present war by any chance end badly for Russia, we may again see an outburst of activity among the revolutionaries. It is a mistake to think that there is no public opinion in Russia corresponding to ours. The public voice exists, but is slow in expression, for a variety of reasons which cannot here be dwelt upon. But when once awakened it is a force not to be ignored, as past years have amply proved. Had there not been a strong popular verdict in favour of the present war against Germany, it would never have met with the support it has among all classes of the Slavonic people ; with them it is a racial struggle, but, more than that, it is primarily a religious war.

Until the building of the Cathedral of the Saviour in Moscow, the Cathedral of St Isaac was held to be the most costly in the world. This beautiful temple was begun by Catherine II., in honour of the saint of Dalmatia. It stands in a capacious square opposite the Alexander Gardens, close to the Hôtel d'Angleterre, and, driving from the Gutaieffsky Harbour, or along the fine Admiralty Quay, you cannot fail to see this impressive edifice of granite, marble and bronze, with its cupola of burnished gold that towers to a height of forty feet above the cross of St Paul's.

The original structure erected by Catherine on this

spot proved unsatisfactory, and Alexander I. ordered it to be rebuilt. The work was entrusted to Montferran, a celebrated architect of the day, whose bust, by the way, I once saw for sale in the Gosteny Dvor—so soon are our famous deeds forgotten. The foundations were laid in 1819, but the task was not completed until 1858. Before a safe soil could be found, it was necessary to sink hundreds of thousands of piles into the treacherous, moist ground, and many tons' weight of granite blocks. Even now the foundations seem unsatisfactory, subsidence occurs, and occasionally alarming fissures make their appearance in the outer walls. These have to be filled up with cement and newly cut blocks of marble. The work of keeping St Isaac's in thorough repair brings a quite respectable revenue to the contractors, but unfortunately while it proceeds an unsightly scaffolding mars the general effect of beauty.

The cathedral is quadrilateral in shape, and has four classical porticoes, supported by monoliths of porphyry and jasper, each of which weighs about one hundred and thirty tons. Round the principal dome are four smaller ones, richly gilt, which shine like planets round a central sun in the summer light. The entire building, within and without, is ornamented with marble of many sorts and colours, and the bronze capitals of the pillars are of great value. All visitors are impressed with the grandeur of the interior. There are three altars, and the principal iconostasc, which resembles the ancient presidium of the Roman and Greek temples, has three rows of icons, some of which are by Italian artists, others by Russian artists of the school of mosaic work on the Vasilii Ostroff. The iconostase is of white marble, with columns of malachite and lapis lazuli brought from Siberia. The beautiful stained-glass window behind it is over twenty-eight feet high, and represents the Saviour. The gold and

silver ornaments and vessels of the church, given, in most cases, by the faithful worshippers, weigh collectively more than four tons. Among its rare treasures is a cross containing the relics of the apostle Andrew Pervozvannavo (*lit.* "first-called"), and a miraculous icon of the Techven Madonna. These, and many other sacred things, are protected by iron bars, sometimes by an iron railing, for the precious stones they contain are worth millions of roubles. Some such precautions are necessary. It has happened before now that the "pious," under the pretext of kissing supposed holy images, have extracted a valuable gem with their teeth—to the real horror of true believers. When the first church was being built some unfortunate wretch attempted to destroy one of the icons, but was detected, and by order of Peter the Great burned alive. Peter, according to his own lights, was a religious and devout man. During my residence in the city the son of one of the officiating priests stole a large diamond from an icon. The culprit, instead of being burned to death, was sent either to Siberia or to a monastery, where he would be compelled to undergo very severe labour and penance. I can only explain the curious fact that the most dangerous criminals and revolutionists have been the sons of priests by supposing that the pent-up evil passions, repressed sternly in the parents, burst forth with tenfold energy in their children when relieved from the restraints imposed by the ordinances of the Church.

But what interested me more than images studded with precious jewels was the glorious singing—the grand old Gregorian chants which the Orthodox Greek Church introduced from Byzantium when the Varangian Grand Dukes of Kieff embraced Christianity, bringing the new faith to Russia with sword and fire. The methods used by them were certainly drastic, but when we think of the human sacrifices,

the diabolical practices, the superstitious rites, that were common in the land of Roos before St Vladimir broke down Perun and the other idols of the Slavs, we can almost forgive these pioneers of Christianity for their haste and zeal. As is well known, there is no instrumental music in Russian churches or cathedrals, and it may be added that it is really not necessary, for the people are not only by nature intensely musical, but are gifted with such sonorous, rich voices that an organ would be superfluous. Some of the voices are of surprising volume and depth, and none who have attended Russian services would wonder at the vocal feats of Chaliapine, the basso who made such a sensation at Covent Garden and at the Grand Opera in Paris. The most remarkable bass voice I remember was at Vishny Volochock, a small town between Moscow and Petrograd, where I once heard a priest intoning the service on the opposite side of a tiny lake. Although he must have been about half-a-mile away, I could distinguish his mellow tones above all the rest, carried across the still water.

I have heard many splendid voices in Russia, but very few good tenors. The extremes of the climate seem to be fatal to the production of rich tenors of delicate timbre and high range, such as one hears in England or in France.

The most suitable time to gain an impression of the grandeur of the service of St Isaac's, and of those of the Orthodox Greek Church in general, is at Easter, Christmas or other notable festivals. The visitor is then struck with the beauty of the ritual of the Orthodox Church—which, in the eyes of all good moujiks, is the only true one ; in which sweet and harmless belief we will leave them, if it gives them any joy to think that they only will be saved in the next world ! Their faith, if not very charitable, is certainly exceedingly simple and comprehensible.

The Gosteny Dvor (Guest Bazaar) on the Nevsky

The Cathedral of St. Isaac of Dalmatia

After seeing the cathedral, it would be well to stroll along the Admiralty Quay fronting the river, and inspect the beautiful statue of Peter the Great, erected by Catherine at a cost of £30,000. It is the work of the talented French sculptor Falconhet, and is one of the finest equestrian statues in existence. On the granite pedestal is the simple inscription: "To Peter the First, from Catherine II." For once Catherine was modest, and refrained from proclaiming herself as Minerva, Venus, Zenobia or Cleopatra. The enormous granite block forming the base was found at Ljachta, about eight miles from the city, and was dragged with great labour to its present site. According to tradition, Peter used to climb upon this very stone and gaze round at the neighbouring country while his "Paradise" was rising from the marshes. This stone is called the "Thunder Stone," for it is believed that it was once struck by lightning and split in two. Considering its weight—166 tons—we can understand easily what tremendous efforts were entailed in transporting it from its original position.

XXVI

TWO TSARS: PAUL, THE "MAD TSAR"; NICHOLAS I., HIS CHARACTER AND AMBITION

THE Inshenerny Zamok, otherwise the School of Engineers, is an interesting building from an historical point of view, since it was once the palace of the "Mad Tsar" Paul, who erected it in the hope that he would reside in it for many years. In fact its walls bear an inscription to that effect; but Paul did not allow for the unscrupulous actions of his many enemies. His palace, the work on which went on day and night, and which was defended by moats and ramparts and cannon, stands on the very spot once occupied by an old fort of the republic of Novgorod, which in those days recognised the importance of this territory, centuries before Peter's town came into existence. Peter, in building here, simply acted on the plans of the Grand Dukes of Novgorod and the Tsars of Muscovy in their ambition to possess this outlet to the Varangian Sea (the Baltic) at any sacrifice.

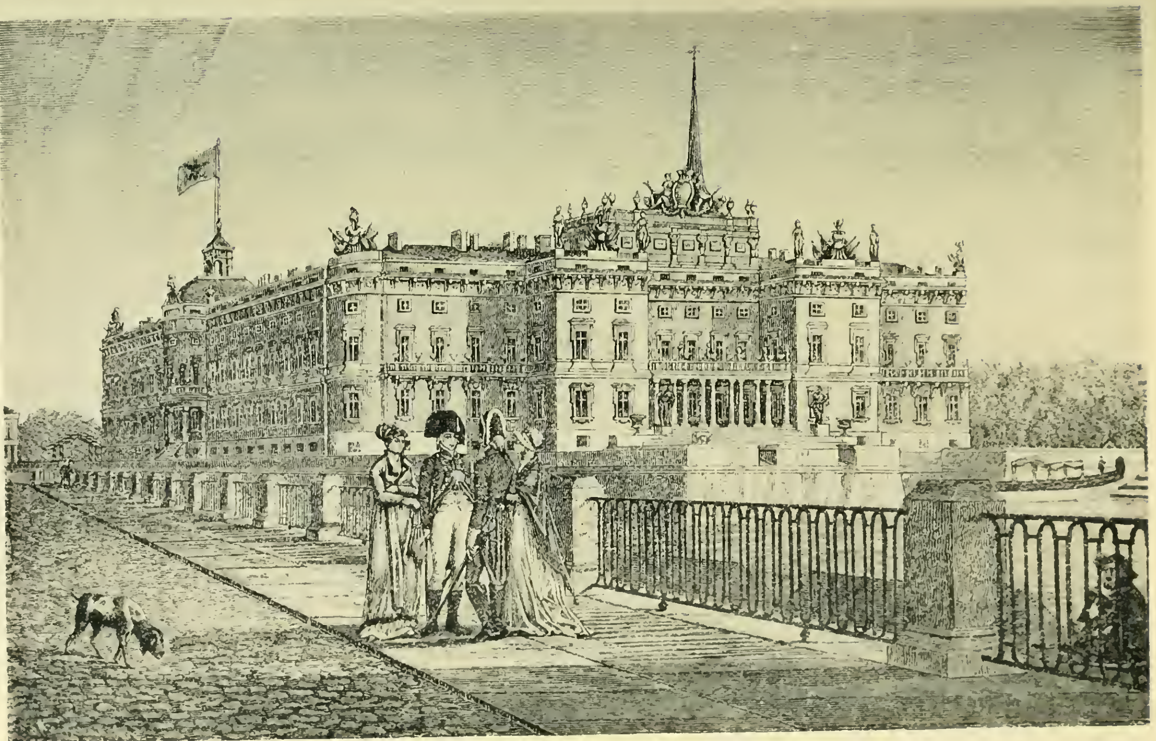
According to a legend, a vision appeared to the sentry in front of the Summer House built here by Peter. An angel ordered the sentry to go to the Tsar and say that a temple should be erected in the name of the Archangel Mechail. When Paul heard of this apparition he said: "The will of the Archangel is already known to me; his wish shall be carried out." We are not told, however, what happened to the sentry for taking his orders from an angel, or whether he was beheaded for leaving his post (as would be extremely likely), but only that in due time the castle was built by Basheneff, according to the Tsar's

own plans and drawings. On 8th November 1800 it was consecrated by the priests. Soldiers guarded it continually, as though the city was in a state of siege. The entrance was decorated tastefully, and traces of its luxury can still be seen. The beautiful staircase leading from the main approach gives an idea of its former splendour. In the upper storey is the immense chamber of the Tsar, now converted into a chapel. In addition to this there is a chapel dedicated to the Archangel Mechail, who so imperiously ordered the palace to be built.

According to historians, Paul died of apoplexy; but if we can credit the memoirs and chronicles of those who took part in the crime, he was murdered by Zooboff and the favourites of Catherine, whom, through his mistaken clemency, he had allowed to return from exile. Mayne, in his *Life of Nicholas I.*, says that the Grand Duke Nicholas was little more than an infant at the time of his father's murder. It is said that the Empress, hearing a noise, took her two youngest sons, Nicholas and Mechail, from their beds, and fled with them for safety, as she thought, to the chamber where the deed was done. The door was guarded by Count Panen, who refused her admittance, telling her that there was nothing to fear. Paul was strangled with his own scarf, and the room is still to be seen where this well-meaning autocrat was put to death.

How many Russian rulers have met a violent end is only too well known to historians. We need not be surprised, therefore, that Paul was no more fortunate than many of his predecessors. Had he not been so attached to his German relations, and to everything German, his long-suffering subjects, who had been used to far more cruel rulers, would probably have tolerated his escapades until he died a natural death. His mother, Catherine, knew the danger of leaning to German ideas, and became, as it were, more Russian

than the Roos; but Paul had neither the wit nor the cunning to hide his true nature. Inheriting German proclivities from his father, Peter III., he soon made himself disliked by favouring German tastes, both in the army and at Court. Like Panin, his instructor, one might say of him that "the Prussian alliance was the first article of his political creed; Frederick II. was his prophet and Berlin was his Mecca. This infatuation was his bane, and ultimately ended in his tragedy, for his Russian subjects could forgive their Tsar for being half mad (among the Russian people madmen are still considered sacred), but they could never forgive his being German in blood and sympathy." There is little doubt that the exercise of supreme power turned his brain, just as it did the brain of Nero and Caligula, though he had some excellent qualities. His occasional flashes of sound commonsense have always been an enigma to historians. Walizeffsky is so interested in this strange mortal that he has written a large volume on the life and character of Paul. "If there are any doubts," he says, "as to who was his father, there can be little doubt that Catherine was the author of this curious creature's existence. But in his ideals and character Paul was so opposed to his mother that she did her utmost to prevent him from succeeding to the throne. He looked on the life and policy of his mother with the strongest aversion, and for this reason, with his extravagant temper, has been considered mad. If he was, then many Russians who are usually thought sane have the same failing, for I have met those in the interior who were as violently opposed to the notions of Catherine as was her unfortunate son." Paul's peculiar conduct with regard to the burial of his father has been cited as evidence of his insanity. The body of the dead Tsar was opened, and Catherine, his dear spouse, remarked that "his heart was



THE OLD MECHAILOFF PALACE, WHERE PAUL I, "THE MAD TSAR," WAS ASSASSINATED

From an engraving

exceedingly small!" The Archbishop of Petrograd (Benjamin ?) states that the corpse was brought to the Alexander Nevsky Monastery in the early morning from Ropcha, and for three days lay in state, so that the nobles and simple folk could pay it their last respects, according to the ancient custom. It was in a white coffin, round which four candelabra constantly burned. The body was in the uniform of his Holstein Regiment, and on the hands, folded across his breast, were white gloves—spotted with blood from the effects of the careless autopsy. The Senators, fearing that the nerves of the Empress, which must have been greatly upset by the sudden change in her fortunes, due to the "colic" from which he was supposed to have died, would suffer, requested her not to take any part in the burial service. Paul, who had method in his madness, on his accession had the body removed from the grave and brought to the Winter Palace, there to be placed in a catafalque by the body of the wife. After it had lain in state, he had it taken back to the monastery and there buried in great pomp. All the regiments of the Guard, as well as troops of the regular army, lined the streets, and nothing was left undone to make the ceremony as imposing and dramatic as possible. Count Alexis Orloff, by a refinement of irony, was ordered to carry the crown of the murdered Tsar, but was so overcome that he leaned in a corner of the church and wept. Whether the tears were false or genuine is a mystery which we can make no attempt to solve. Orloff was discovered with extreme difficulty, and was hardly to be persuaded to join the procession. The Emperor and the Grand Dukes followed on foot, although the cold on the day was almost insupportable.

H. E. Gretch in his Memoirs says: "I saw the cortège from the window, in the house of the Petro-pavlovsk Cathedral. The Guards lined both sides of the Nevsky Prospekt. Among the gigantic grenadiers

in their light green uniforms and their splendid casques were to be seen the petty soldiers from the Palace of Gatchina, in the ridiculous Prussian uniform of the Seven Years' War. General attention was centred on three men bearing the ends of the pall; these were Count Alex Gregorivitch Orloff, Prince Barjatinsky and Passak." By an ingenious revenge the men who were accused of causing the Tsar's death were chosen to take a leading part in the ceremonial. Paul was not so mad after all, if this was his idea of retribution.

I have often wandered round the palace and gazed on the equestrian statue of Paul before the entrance, but I have never had occasion to enter this house of terrible memories.

Close to the Summer Gardens is the Champ de Mars, an immense plain where magnificent parades and military reviews are held. On the left, looking towards the Neva, are the enormous barracks of the Pavlovski Regiment, built by Paul. All the men of this regiment have snub noses. It is said that the practice of enlisting men with this peculiar form of nose was originated by Paul, who did not wish his own nose "put out of joint" by having soldiers around him continually with nice straight noses.

Paul was inclined to be a martinet in matters of discipline. He once ordered a whole regiment to wheel round and march right off to Siberia, because something in their equipment did not please his Prussian notions of neatness. The unhappy men obeyed without a murmur, and had achieved a good distance on their terrific journey when Paul was sent to his last account—fortunately for them—by those who could not stand his pranks and antics.

Another instance of this quality was shown when on one occasion a droshky-driver ran over a pedestrian. Paul ordered that every cabby in Petrograd should

leave the city *pro tem.* Of course this drastic remedy was effectual, and as long as he reigned very few people were run over by the careless drivers, who had learnt their lesson.

Mayne, writing in 1854, in his *Life of Nicholas I.*, thus describes this Emperor[1]:

"The Tsar is now fifty-seven years of age; in person, tall and commanding, being about six feet two inches in height, well made, but inclined to corpulency. As yet, however, this is kept within due bounds by tight lacing, said to be very injurious to his health. His shoulders and chest are broad and full, his limbs clean and well made, his hands and feet are small and finely formed. The Emperor has a Grecian profile, a high but receding forehead, that and the nose being in one grand line; the eyes are finely lined, clear, large and blue; the mouth is delicately cut, with good teeth and a protruding chin; the face is large, and his whole air is military. As a young man, the Tsar was cold, stern and dignified, even with his youthful companions. He is unbending to all, both in public and domestic intercourse, except to the Empress, to whom he is said to be sincerely attached."

Although Nicholas admired and copied the Prussian military organisation, he looked upon the Duke of Wellington as the beau-ideal of a soldier, just as the Emperor William regarded the late Field-Marshal Lord Roberts in the same light. But both monarchs, though admirers of England in many things, were destined to fight against her.

The Marquis de Castine, who saw more of Nicholas than any other foreigner, formed a by no means flattering opinion of this autocrat, whose ambitions in the

[1] The Panslavists are now endeavouring to carry out the political ideals of Catherine II. and Nicholas I. as far as possible.

Balkans and in Asia Minor were to drench Europe in blood, although Russia, even in his days, possessed far more territory than she could develop, populate or cultivate. The Russian writer Golovin describes him as an unmitigated despot, and condemns him for his harsh treatment of literary men, the majority of whom, with the exception of Gogol, he either feared or hated. For example: when Lermontoff, the poet, died, Nicholas exclaimed: "He lived like a dog and he has died like one." Rylieff, who wrote poems on Varangian Russia, of times when the people were free, he hanged. That was his way of treating native talent. Another young poet of Liberal tendencies Nicholas called and embraced, and all believed that this poet, Polejaieff, was to be favoured; but the Tsar made him a soldier—a terrible punishment in those days—and when he died, a friend, wishing to find the body, was told to look among the boxes which are used as coffins for the common soldiers. These are but a few of the eminent men visited with the displeasure of Nicholas.

Most Russian literary men of talent have been unfortunate, ending their lives in misery or exile. Pushkin was exiled to the Caucasus; Dostoieffsky to Siberia; Tchedrin (Saltikoff) was disgraced, and Skalkoffsky was thrown into a dungeon, where he died. Even now it is a perilous thing to be reckoned among the so-called *intelligentsia* (the educated classes). Should you belong to them you will sooner or later be suspected by the police and written down in their books as *neblaganadeshny* (not to be trusted). As a young man I often gave thanks that I was born a British subject and could pursue my affairs and tastes freely in Russia. Had I been a Russian this would have been very risky. One easily understands, bearing this in mind, why the works of Gogol, Pushkin, Turgenieff, Tolstoi, Dostoieffsky, Gorki and other

Russians are tinged with such deep sadness, pessimism and even despair. Speaking once with Rjepin, the Russian painter, on this theme, he said to me: "Ah, your Shakespeare, Byron, Burns, Dickens, Fielding, and the rest, are all healthy men; but we are all *bolnie lude* (sick men)." True, I thought—all mentally sick; not one with the healthy spirit and joy of life found in our English writers. England's great literary men are the product of centuries of liberty, while Russia's are the outcome of conquest, oppression, suppression and persecution, which has been going on ever since the country was invaded and crushed by the Tartars.

It is not easy to explain the dislike of Nicholas for the gentler arts. One would have thought that he would simply ignore them, for, according to Mayne, "the one overwhelming feature of the Tsar's character was his ambition to be a great Emperor and to make Russia the chief Empire of the world. This seems to have been his aim from the moment he ascended the throne, even if it was not the dream of his life from a still earlier period. The partition of Poland with others, his amenities to Austria, the assistance he rendered during the civil war in Hungary, were all so many present self-denials to smooth the way for the conquest of the land on which he had set his heart—Turkey. For long years, as witnessed by the diplomatic correspondence lately published, he had determined to own the keys of the Empire of the East, which he thought, and probably truly, added to his mighty Northern possessions, would give him supreme domination. Very crafty, deep-laid and sagacious have been his plans; but the British feeling for protecting the weak, and the far-sighted policy of the Emperor of the French, have unexpectedly come in his way."

But now, with England, France, Serbia and Italy,

the Allies of Russia in her endeavours to reach Constantinople and to be the leader of the Slav states of the Balkans, it seems that all that Napoleon and England laboured to prevent in the Crimean War will be attained. Russia's huge population, which doubles every fifty years, will make her the first power in Europe and Asia, now that the might of Germany is being laid low under the hammer-like blows of the Powers composing the Quadruple Entente. In fifty or sixty years Russia, with the Slav provinces of Austria, which she is resolved upon annexing, will have a population of above four hundred millions—as many as the Empire of China. The realisation of Nicholas's dream may not then be an impossibility; but all waits upon the result of the present dreadful conflict.

XXVII

SIR ROBERT MORIER AND THE BRITISH EMBASSY

ONE of the oldest buildings on the Palace Quay is the British Embassy, at the corner of the Field of Mars. Here have laboured many famous men—Lord Loftus, Sir Edward Thornton, Lord Dufferin, Lascelles, Sir Charles Scott, Sir Nicholas O'Conor and others. Of the notable men I met none made a greater impression upon me than the late Sir Robert Morier, our ambassador while I lived in Petrograd, son of the British ambassador in Teheran, and author of the amusing *Hadji Baba*, a vivid picture of Oriental life.

Only the Foreign Office, *au courant* with the political and diplomatic activity of its representatives abroad, knows how much the British people owe to this champion of their interests and ideals. From those who were behind the scenes, I learnt that Sir Robert twice saved us from war with Russia, principally through his personality and his great influence with the Tsar Alexander III., who had an immense admiration and respect for him. I remember, on the second occasion when the Tsar and his Court had journeyed to Livadia, preparatory to declaring war upon Bulgaria and invading that country, Sir Robert, on his own responsibility, went to the Crimea and managed to dissuade the Tsar from his project. This was in 1894 or 1895, shortly before Stambouloff was cut to pieces with yataghans in the street of Sophia. The troops were mobilised in Odessa; everything was ready, when Sir Robert appeared and pointed out that the placing of an army in Bulgaria was tantamount to a

war with England. The Tsar, who knew that he was dealing with a man who meant what he said, took the hint, and did not return to Moscow to proclaim war, as he had intended. Thus Europe was saved from a conflagration and much useless bloodshed.

The last occasion on which I saw Sir Robert Morier was when he was leaving for Schwalbach, to die, broken down by years of anxiety and by the deep grief at the loss of his only son, a handsome, popular Englishman in Petrograd's British colony. It was the old story—a bright life and a promising career cut short by infatuation for a beautiful woman, and it practically brought the ambassador with sorrow to his grave. The old lion, as I used to think him, was about to depart for the station when I sent up my card and informed his officials of my errand. Although he had only a very short time to spare, and was busied with many final arrangements, he received me willingly. "Mr Steveni," he said, as I entered his private rooms, "I am very ill, and shall perhaps never come back here again; but the business you come upon is of such interest to me that I cannot refuse you an interview." The business related to the opening out of Siberia to British trade by means of the Kara Sea route, to which Sir Robert, his son, and the famous navigator, Captain Wiggins, had for years been giving much attention. Through these three persons this ancient trade route was again opened, and should the vast wealth of Central and Eastern Siberia ever find its way to the markets of London, it will be due to the energy, public spirit and self-sacrifice of these pioneers of commerce in the frozen North. It would take too long to mention the half of the mineral and agricultural possibilities held by this project. Sufficient to say that I did my utmost to carry out what might almost be called the dying request of our great ambassador—to bring this route and the immense

potentialities of Siberia before the English public by means of many articles in the Press.

Sir Robert, as he predicted, never recovered from the malady which, in poetic terms, might be called a broken heart. Before he left, he showed me a beautiful bronze statuette of the Emperor Frederick, given to him by that monarch as a mark of friendship when he represented England at the Court of Hesse-Darmstadt. His admiration for this Emperor and the Empress brought on him the wrath and malice of Bismarck, who endeavoured by guile and intrigue to get him dismissed from office, on the charge of betraying German secrets to the French. These attacks, not only on Sir Robert, but on the memory of the Emperor Frederick, our ambassador rebutted with such energy that Bismarck, who was then striving to embitter the relations between England and Russia, was foiled, and had to retire discomfited. It was not the only time the Iron Chancellor tried to undermine the influence of our Russian ambassador; but on this occasion he met his match in a man who fought with clean hands. More than once the Government at home wished to recall Sir Robert, but the Tsar was so pleased with him that his services were retained.

His death was an irreparable blow to England. Unlike many diplomatists, he was above stooping to the tricks and deceptions that too often tarnish the profession. I was told that he never lied in his country's interests; if he could not answer a question, he kept silence. He used to swear, on occasion, like a trooper, and a round British oath on his lips seemed to carry great weight! In his strong, firm hands, often holding the balance between peace and war, our honour was safe. Such giants of body and intellect are not seen every day, and now that the Empire is convulsed with battles we can better appreciate Sir

Robert Morier's constant efforts for "peace on earth and good will towards men."

The foreign affairs of England, for reasons some of which I fail to comprehend, have been for generations in the hands of the aristocracy and the leisured classes, and not controlled by men who have risen by their own ability, regardless of their origin; and, as the representative of a Liberal—I might almost say a Radical—paper, I did not often visit the British Embassy. Perhaps for this cause I was doubly welcomed at the American Legation, where men of worth rather than birth manage the affairs of the great republic which prefers to bestow on its editors, publishers, its journalists and men of letters these high positions. When Sir Andrew White, the American Minister, was doubtful as to the truth of any report, he would send for me, and say: "I find it so difficult to learn the truth in this city that before deciding what to believe I want your opinion." When we remember all the tittle-tattle and scandal constantly flying round in a city such as Petrograd, and the Oriental imaginations of the Russians, who delight in *nebwliitza*—literally, "things that never happened"—we cannot wonder at any ambassador being perplexed in such novel surroundings. Sir Andrew White, who was President of Cornell University, and a man of immense wealth, spent most of his time in literary work. His books, the fruit of incessant labour and large sums laid out in obtaining the best material, will always be appreciated by those who value thoroughness in literature. His works on *Modern Germany* and *The Conflict between Science and Religion* are perhaps his most familiar. In spite of his talents, his wealth and his responsible position, he was an exceedingly simple and unaffected man.

His successor, Emery Smith, with whom I co-operated in the tremendous work of relieving the distress of the suffering peasants during the great famine

of 1891-1892, was another remarkable character.[1] He had formerly been editor of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*, and was a fine orator. His energy was untiring, and on quitting Russia he was nominated to the position of Minister of the Post in the United States. The last American ambassador I knew was General Brackenridge, who took a prominent part in the Civil War.

The practice of electing smart men of ability, who have risen through merit, to these honourable positions should, I think, be imitated by our own Foreign Office. They are, as a rule, more capable, more fitted to represent the ideals and desires of the people of a nation, than men of birth, privilege and rank—men of one particular class whose honours have been gained, not by hard work, but generally by influence, and who can but represent a small section of the community.

In Germany the Socialistic and Democratic parties intend demanding that the people should, in future, be consulted with regard to foreign affairs and making treaties with foreign powers, as soon as this sanguinary struggle is over.

I trust that, as we grow wiser from the bitter teachings of experience, the people of England and Russia will be brought into closer and more direct contact with one another, and that they will be able to exercise a greater and more direct influence on foreign affairs than they do at present.

This was also the desire of the great writer and thinker Leo Tolstoi, who before his death expressed to me the hope that there would sooner or later be a union of hearts and mind between the Russian and English people; for such a union would be more lasting and beneficial than political ententes and alliances, which are evanescent and as changeable as the wind.

[1] For further details see *Through Famine-stricken Russia*, by W. B. S. (Sampson Low, 1892).

There is little doubt that, when the 112,000,000 Russian peasants become educated and more advanced, they will exercise a great and lasting influence on the destinies of Europe.

Sir Robert Morier foresaw this, and once in a speech at the Anglo-American Chapel let fall the following remarkable words :—

" Let us thank God that He has given the Russian peasantry a kind and good heart ; for in future years the destinies of Europe will so much depend on their character and ideals ! "

XXVIII

COUNT SERGIUS DE WITTE

I HAVE interviewed many eminent men in the course of my duties as correspondent, and among them was Count de Witte, Minister of Finance, and afterwards Chancellor of the Empire and President of the Council of Ministers. Like other men of talent who have left their mark on history, he began in quite a humble position—it is said as stationmaster on a private railway. His extraordinary energy and organising capacity, displayed during the Russo-Turkish War, led him to an important post in the Government, and he soon made himself felt in every department. For years he was practically the ruler of Russia, so that some called him jokingly " Sergius Witte the First." The title was not wholly undeserved, for it is stated that, had it not been for his efforts in conjunction with the Tsar, Russia would have gone to war with us in India and Afghanistan, about the time of the Tugela disaster. This was then without doubt the aim of the military party in Petrograd ; in fact an officer of high position informed me that the War Office had already drawn up a plan of campaign and carried out an experimental mobilisation of troops on the Afghan frontier. The Count, who wished to see Russia prosperous, went dead against the war party, and refused to grant the requisite funds, on the ground that such a conflict would cripple the country for a hundred years to come. Although he assumed this pacific attitude, it was more from motives of finance than any particular love for England. There is little doubt that his sympathies were with his German neighbours

rather than with the people of our island Empire. He was a typical Great Russian—great in body and mind; but his origin was German or Dutch. He appeared to me more like a gigantic Boer farmer than a German, and I should not be surprised if his ancestors hailed from Holland, the home of another famous statesman of the same name, Cornelius de Witte.

Never shall I forget my interview with this colossal man with the pale face and stolid features; so preoccupied did he seem with affairs of State that it seemed as though his countenance could never relax into a smile. His replies to my questions were very guarded; he evidently did not wish to commit himself in any way, and repeatedly said that he desired to cultivate "commercial relations with England, on an economical basis." So much stress was laid on the word "economical" that I plainly saw he had no idea of entering into any friendly alliance, but simply wanted to encourage closer business ties. He was intent upon improving Russia's financial position, and on giving her a gold currency—in which he succeeded.

After the Peace of Portsmouth Witte's influence rapidly declined. It was currently reported at that time that the Government and people never forgave him for agreeing to give up half of Saghalien to the Japanese. The Tsar's instructions were that not a rouble should be paid to Japan as indemnity, not a yard of territory yielded. Witte worked for peace in order to carry out his industrial schemes for making Russia one of the world's richest countries, and consented to the Treaty of Portsmouth, owing to the diplomatic pressure of America and other neutral powers. Considering that on the whole the Japanese were victors, Witte's efforts were deserving of more gratitude than fell to his share; but ingratitude is the world's reward, and after a time, retired from high office, he took a less important position in the Council,

where his voice was frequently heard, but where his power to carry through his pet projects was much reduced.

I have been told that he maintained his power with the Tsar by clever stratagem. The Tsar then resided at his palace, Tsarskoe Selo, and every week the Ministers travelled by a special train to place their reports before him and to obtain his sanction. Witte, knowing that the last man would have the best chance of talking, usually managed to miss the special and arrive by a later train, " owing to pressure of business " or some such excuse. He would inquire what had been decided upon with regard to the propositions of the others ; then, with plenty of time before him, his commanding personality would gain its own way, his arguments being generally plausible enough to succeed.

It would take long to enumerate the financial, industrial and other reforms Count de Witte carried out during his term of office. Among his many achievements, he was responsible for the buying up of private railways and placing them under State control ; the Government spirit monopoly ; the gold currency and the construction of many new ports and harbours on the Pacific, the Black Sea and the Baltic. He also took an active part in planning the Trans-Siberian line. Daring to a degree, his critics used to say that he would either ruin Russia or make it the most powerful country in the world ; but his removal from office, and the Japanese War, prevented either of these prophecies from fulfilment. His policy was certainly not entirely beneficial, for his high tariff helped to make the lives of millions of the wretched peasantry a greater burden than before, when they were serfs. Agricultural interests, which in Russia ought to come before all others, were neglected and starved in order to establish a great number of factories and mills all over the land, which were supported by

a system of tariffs on foreign imports. Capital which might have been spent in teaching the peasants to till the fertile black soil, or in assisting them with advances at low interest by means of agricultural banks (which have now been established in many provinces), was to a great extent wasted. The policy certainly succeeded in making many manufacturers extremely wealthy, but it brought into being a large proletariat which has more than once proved a danger to the State. In these operations, it must be admitted, Count de Witte, statesman though he was, showed a lack of foresight.

The origin of his State monopoly on spirits, which in truth was no reform at all, is interesting. Alexander III., who was by no means an abstainer, during his last incurable malady (kidney disease) became afflicted with qualms of conscience because so large a proportion of the population was being annually destroyed, physically, mentally and morally, through the ever-increasing consumption of vodka and other fiery liquors. (Tolstoi was so incensed at this that he designed a label for vodka bottles; on it appeared the word "Poison" and a skull and cross-bones.) After a journey through Finland, a sober and well-administered country, the Tsar came to the conclusion that if the Finnish authorities could check this national evil, his own advisers should be able to follow the good example. He therefore consulted de Witte, who in response proposed that the Crown should itself take over the sale of all spirituous drinks, and that all profits thus acquired should go to the Crown instead of to the *traktershiks* (publicans). The Tsar jumped at this grand idea. While encouraging sobriety and thrift, the Government would benefit immensely. Like the majority of Russian projects, very fine in theory, this so-called reform proved a terrible failure. The net result was that far more spirits were consumed than before, despite the praiseworthy efforts of many

temperance societies. Formerly, the working classes assembled in the *trakteers* and drank there as much as the tavern-keepers would allow them, but after the change there was practically no control. Spirits were sold by the bottle instead of by the glass, the smallest being named a "Wittochke," in honour of the Minister. For twenty-four copecks—our sixpence—a fairly large bottle could be purchased. Usually this was drunk straight off, on an empty stomach, and the poor moujiks would collapse in some doorway, speechlessly intoxicated. Again, the bottle would be taken home, and the wives would join in a carouse, while the children from their earliest years acquired a taste for strong drink. Thus the curse spread and misery haunted thousands of little homes—to a much greater extent than in England; for the Russian workpeople, owing to the poor sustaining powers of their food, cannot stand half the quantity of spirits that an Englishman or Scotsman can carry. One glass will often upset their ill-nourished bodies. The number unfit for service in the army increased each year; physical degeneracy became a danger to the State. The reform due to the present war came just in time, and the sudden and drastic manner of it proved how necessary it was.

In his well-known book on the Russian people, Maurice Baring has some interesting remarks upon Count de Witte:

"The war with Japan [he says] came about owing to the sudden *volte face* in Russia's policy with regard to the Far East, when the Government decided to adopt the aggressive policy of Bezobrazeff instead of the peaceful policy of development which had been initiated and followed by Witte. It will be to Count Witte's lasting credit as a statesman that he saw clearly on this matter. As far back as the

time of the Russo-China operations he stated, with regard to the occupation of Manchuria, that Russia was not in a fit state to carry on an aggressive policy. In the beginning of 1903, five months before he retired from the post of Minister of Foreign Affairs, and a year before the war, he explained himself clearly on the subject in a report on his journey to the Far East. He argues thus: (*a*) That he did not consider a conflict with Japan to be inevitable, because owing to the building of the Manchurian Railway it was possible that Russia and Japan might come to an agreement on the basis of commercial interests, which are the chief factors in obviating international armed conflicts. There was, therefore, reason to think that a peaceful solution of the questions at issue might be arrived at, on a basis of this kind, in the near future. (*b*) If such a hope were groundless, it was in any case imperatively necessary to defer the conflict, and to attempt to find at least a temporary solution, a compromise, which would satisfy Japan with regard to Korea. An armed conflict with Japan, said Witte, would, in his opinion, prove a great misfortune. It was necessary, however, for Russia to get ready. Even if it were a choice between a conflict and a total cession of Korean interests to Japan, the latter would be the lesser evil of the two."

XXIX

THE RUSSIAN PRESS

The war with Germany has changed the affairs of the Press in Russia so greatly that I feel it advisable to use the past tense in speaking of the papers I know so well. Most of them were in existence at the outbreak of hostilities, but if the struggle goes on for many more months it is extremely likely that many of them will close down.

The chief papers were : *The Government Advertiser* (*Pravetelstvenny Vjestrik*), *The Financial and Industrial Gazette*, the *Journal de St Petersburg*, the *Petersburgsky Vjedemost*, the *Novaya Vremya*, the *Grashdanin*, the *Svjet*, the *Novosti*, the *Sin Otechestva*, the *Ootra*, *The Exchange Gazette*, the *Roos*, the *Petersburg Zeitung*, the *Herold* and the *Nedjely*—the last one a weekly.

The Government Advertiser was a purely official organ, and generally contented itself with making known the opinions and decisions of the Government. *The Financial Gazette*, though not a regular daily, was an important publication, being the favourite mouthpiece of the Minister of Finance. The *Journal de St Petersburg*, semi-official, is simply an echo of the leading Government organs, and a verbatim translation into French of news that has already appeared in other sheets, read principally by those who did not understand Russian, or by the aristocracy—who for the most part have a weakness for conversing in the elegant language of France, even when their hearers are Russians like themselves.

The *Vjedemosti* was very much to the fore after the Tsar's visit to India. Its editor, Prince Oochtemsky,

was believed to be a personal friend of the present Tsar; but it is a question whether this has anything to do with its sentiments. One interesting fact concerning it is that it annually received a large subsidy for publishing all the Government advertisements.

The *Novaya Vremya*, which is sometimes inspired, is perhaps the most powerful paper in the country, and still enjoys great popularity, though it was far from scrupulous, or fair to its political opponents. Like some of its contemporaries, it went with the times, and was rewarded for its laxity by a circulation of 70,000—a large number for a daily in Russia. Its policy was worldly-wise, perhaps, since other papers have been temporarily or wholly suppressed for venturing to express opinions in opposition to those prevailing in official circles. The editor was a clever and able journalist, who would have had more influence among well-informed, educated people had he been more particular and more careful of his facts. At one time the *Novaya Vremya* was exceedingly hostile towards England, losing no opportunity of abusing us. Being wealthy, its correspondents were well paid, and it was usually supplied with plenty of fresh telegraphic news, which, however, often proved excessively biassed. This hostility eventually assumed such an aggressive form that one of our leading correspondents called on its former celebrated editor, Souvorin, and asked him what he meant by abusing England on every possible and impossible occasion. Souvorin, whom the French journalists described as a combination of an old Russian boyar and Mephistopheles, was not a whit abashed, and smilingly replied to our indignant countryman: "You see, I have no other resource. I must abuse some nation, for you know that suits the taste of my readers. Now England is the only one left for me to attack. I cannot go for our ally France, obviously, nor can I insult Germany, as the ties

between our Imperial houses are so notable. What else, then, can I do?" It is well, perhaps, in the light of such confessions, not to take too much notice of all the leaders one reads in the influential Press of modern nations!

The *Grashdanin* was another strong paper, but latterly its power has waned in consequence of several prohibitions and fines by the censors. *Plus roi que le roi*, and more conservative than the Government, the eccentric editor had an unlucky talent for not pleasing anybody but himself. The Liberals cordially detested him, while the official party thought him a nuisance for his persistent advocacy of retrograde, old-fashioned measures and his scorn of all who did not happen to agree with him. He was a great advocate of corporal punishment, and used to lament the "good old times" when the nobles and boyars could, if they chose, flog their serfs to death with impunity. This editor, Prince Metchersky, frequently got into serious trouble. He once was soundly horse-whipped by two young men, whose father they imagined he had insulted in one of his leading articles. More than once his paper was suppressed for publishing articles attacking President Faure, the French alliance, and the French army—which, according to him, was good for nothing. Yet we could not help respecting the editor of the *Grashdanin*, whether we agreed with his diatribes or not, for he was one of the few who had courage to speak their minds and to abide by the consequences—which in Russia are often disastrous for such as may follow his example. After repeated stoppages the paper managed to appear as a weekly, to be read by musty, retired officials, country gentry and the older aristocracy. Metchersky was a bitter enemy of the Jews, and wrote most pungent leaders against this oppressed and unpopular race. After the appearance of one of these philippics,

of singular virulence, I called on him to inquire why he was so " down " on them. " Why ? " he answered fiercely, rolling his big eyes, " why do we kill fleas and other parasites ? " I retorted that Jews were by no means vermin, and that we had no right to treat them as such; but he contradicted me, asserting that every nation and every individual had the right to get rid of parasites. Before his death, which took place last year (1914), Metchersky changed his opinions like a modern Saul, and instead of preaching persecution and death to the Jews, advocated that they should no longer be confined within the pale of settlements, but should be distributed all over the Empire, so that their commercial and business instincts might assist in developing its vast resources. He had come to the conclusion that his own countrymen were lacking in enterprise and energy. This was a great surprise to all who knew him. With all his prejudices, Metchersky was a man of remarkable gifts and strong individuality. He was brought up with the late Tsar, Alexander III., and, on the whole, was held to be one of Russia's most talented editors.

The *Svjet* must not be passed over in silence, although the proportions of this paper were diminutive and its contents merely a stale copy of news that had previously appeared—often a week before. As it was read chiefly by country folk, and the majority of its subscribers were never in a hurry for the latest information, this peculiarity did not matter. Possibly its cheapness—two copecks ($\frac{1}{2}$d.)—explains its circulation, which equals that of the *Novaya Vremya*. In a land where a good newspaper costs three halfpence or twopence, a halfpenny charge for the equivalent of a sheet and a half of foolscap is considered very cheap indeed.

Next to the *Novaya Vremya* in political importance we must rank the *Novosti*, although its circulation was small—only about 17,000. It was known as a Jewish

organ, and had a Jewish editor, but was one of the most moderate and reputable papers of the capital. In politics it was inclined to the Liberal side, as far as it dared go, standing for Western ideas and reform—tendencies which excited the wrath of all good Panslavists, Chauvinists and so-called "Kvass" patriots, who fancy that Russia can only be saved by swallowing their political prescriptions. ("Kvass" is the national beverage, made from sour, fermented bread.) In the days when it was the fashion to abuse England, the *Novosti* spoke out pretty freely on our continued occupation of Egypt, yet on the whole was very friendly towards this country, and favoured an understanding between us and the Dual Alliance. Unfortunately it had little influence among the real Russians—not only on account of its small circulation, but because its editor was a Jew—an insurmountable objection in Muscovite eyes, which see no possible good in anything touched by an Israelite. The editor, Mr Notovitch, dramatised *The Pickwick Papers*, and had the piece staged in Petrograd at his own expense. Eventually he was expelled from Russia and his paper suppressed.[1]

The *Sin Otechestva* has the qualities of age and historical associations. Founded in 1812, in commemoration of the expulsion of the French from Russia, by the irony of fate it subsequently became a warm supporter of France and the Franco-Russian Alliance. More than once it roused the anger of Pushkin, the poet, who, in an outburst, playing on its name, which means "Son of the Fatherland," exclaimed: "What son of the Fatherland art thou? Thou art simply the son of a dog!" The original is too strong to be literally translated; this is a mild rendering.

The *Petersburg Zeitung*, seldom quoted in the English

[1] M. Notovitch was a great advocate of the Triple Entente.

Press, was a paper of some standing, although it was patronised solely by the German population of the capital and the Baltic Provinces. As a rule it supported the feudal interests and privileges of the German barons, and was devotedly hated by all good Russians—first, because it was German; secondly, because it opposed as far as it dared the Russianising policy of the Government among the Germans, Livonians, Esthonians and other inhabitants of the Baltic Provinces. The *Herold*, another German paper, had a large circulation, but carried little weight politically. It was eagerly read by the German merchants, shopkeepers and handicraftsmen of the city.

There were several other dailies, of small importance but very popular among the *kooptzee* (peasant merchants) and *lavotchniks* (small business men). The chief attraction of these precious prints was their partiality for blackguarding everything and everybody who did not happen to please the enterprising journalists who ran them. Both the *Listock* and *The Gazette* made it a cardinal part of their creed—if they could be said to have one—to abuse some person or nation every morning. The stronger the abuse, the better the article, according to the opinion of the edified readers. When neither Salisbury, Gladstone, Bismarck, Balfour nor Caprivi had misconducted himself, then some unfortunate country came in for the wrath of these knights of the pen. One day England might be the sinner, another day Germany, a third perhaps Austria, and when these failed, Italy, Switzerland or any other nation would do. England, however, was always the favourite villain of the piece. Had it not been for "perfidious Albion," the Russian Press of those days would indeed have had a very dull time of it. There was hardly a crime, intrigue or conspiracy in the world of politics which England had not a hand in. She was charged with deliberately killing

off the aborigines of Africa with guns and rum ; poisoning the Chinese with opium ; with stirring up the Armenians against Russia ; with intentionally bringing the plague to Europe ! But when King Edward went to Russia and inaugurated the Triple Entente, the tune was soon changed.

With the exception of two or three Government organs, almost all the journalists indulged in this spleen against England, according to their lights, and their misplaced industry certainly succeeded in instilling a fervent antipathy, if not hatred, towards our country for years. This was much to be regretted, for England was formerly popular in Russia, and of course now again is liked.

Every year a number of new papers spring into precarious existence, only to achieve a tragic termination by the hands of the Damoclean censors, whose all-powerful mandates are the terror of editors. The papers are not long-lived unless they float with the official tide. Their suppression is a pity, for some of them were brought out with great taste, and their printing and illustrations were excellent. The *Mirovoi Otogloski*, said to have been a resurrection of the once famous *Golos*, deserves special mention. It might have succeeded had it not been so dear.

The Moscow Press merits little attention. With the exception of the *Moskovsky Vjedemesti* and the *Russky Vjedemesti* it is of small importance. The first, since the death of its celebrated controller, Katkoff, who made and unmade ministers at his pleasure and pretty well led official and public opinion, is no more what it used to be ; he gave it name and fame beyond the limits of his own land. The second was the favourite of the liberal professors and men of letters in Moscow. It often received pressing attentions from the censor, who intimated that its views did not meet with the approval of the powers, and, as

might be anticipated, this progressive and enlightened paper lived on the brink of disaster. It is probably extinct by now. Moscow produced several other curious sheets, which waxed fat by levying blackmail on the rich merchants. It was wonderful what a golden harvest this system brought in for the proprietors of these publications. Their names I will not give, but they are well known to everyone who has lived in Moscow. It was but necessary to insinuate that such and such a man had dealt in a certain kind of goods, or was on the verge of bankruptcy, or was addicted to dishonest practices, for the guilty party, without being named, to rush to the editorial office and make his peace-offering, sometimes to the tune of hundreds of roubles. Great is the power of the Press when wielded in a just cause! I suspect that most of these unprincipled papers, however, have now succumbed to the strain of the present conflict, when readers have something more urgent to do than the perusal of scandal and ill-natured chatter about personalities whose fame is but local.

It is remarkable to see the change that came over the views of Souvorin, the former bitter Anglophobe editor of the *Novoe Vremya*, before his death. He actually laboured for a friendly alliance with England, and in an interview with an Englishman spoke of the literature of the two countries, and the possibility of union, as follows :—

" The Russians, from the eighteenth century, have always been fond of English novels, and still love them. It must be remembered that the English were our teachers, and Shakespeare, Byron, Thackeray and Dickens are regarded as almost of our own country. The Russians and the English both possess humour, and humour is the evidence of a strong soul, capable of enduring the greatest trials with the fortitude of a martyr. If we have not loved the English in our

political life, it is because they have caused us quite enough trouble. There are other similar traits in both nations, and sometimes the Russian is the superior of the Englishman. We, like England, have our aristocracy of intelligence in Grebojedeff, Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenieff, Tolstoi, Dostoieffsky, Glinka, Bruloff and others, without reckoning our contemporaries." He also added that diplomacy generally does not recognise the most important influence on the fate of peoples—their literature and art, believing that these are quite unnecessary. In reality they are the very soul of a nation, its strivings, its real thoughts. His words as to the love of the Russians for English literature are absolutely correct. It is wonderful what a number of English classics have been and still are being translated—how widely and willingly our famous writers are read. Even Bunyan and Milton find their public; but owing to their religious and archaic style their readers, as a rule, are the peasant classes, who delight in works where God, the devil, angels and archangels take a prominent part. To the Russian peasant these unseen beings and all the saints of the calendar form real and living personalities, which colour his daily existence. If the inhabitants of the towns live in the twentieth century, the vast majority of the peasants are mentally still in the Middle Ages, taking more interest in miracles, icons, pilgrimages, omens and witchcraft than in theatres, picture palaces, newspapers and cheap literature.

XXX

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENTS AND THE CENSORS

The best-informed body of men in Petrograd, next to the diplomatic corps, was without question the little band of newspaper correspondents which the Government tolerated in their midst. The journalistic activity of its members was continually being curtailed by the severity of the censors, who, with a mighty pair of scissors, clipped and mutilated many a message sent abroad, in order that the " Rotten West " should not learn too much of what was going on in "Holy Russia." This small group of English and foreign writers was, as a rule, far better informed as to events in Russia than were the ambassadors or diplomats themselves, who usually sat in all their glory at the embassies waiting for news, while we unfortunate people " got busy " searching for items all over the city—in the many Government departments, in the salons of the wealthy and influential, at official receptions and in various other less reputable places which need not be mentioned here. Then, sooner or later, the embassies heard from us of the changes that were in progress all round them.

There were many types of correspondents. Strictly honourable men usually only represented one paper, and were satisfied with the pay thus earned. The English members of our community, with few exceptions, came under this category. They had, however, a hard struggle to compete with another class, who were not above working at one time for half-a-dozen papers of different interests and nationalities, or even receiving payment from banks abroad for sending off

telegrams calculated to influence stocks and shares favourably. These men, who threw all scruples to the winds, were most difficult to deal with, owing to the high salary they received from their many employers. They came more to the front as the papers became engrossed in the effort to please a sensation-loving public, until finally the position of the old-fashioned, straightforward correspondent was almost intolerable. Editors found it necessary to supply the demand, and, as this increased, our labours became more onerous. Honest writers were constantly placed on the horns of a dilemma. If they sent sensational news off to please their papers, they came into conflict with the police and the censors. If they refused to do this, they were eventually dismissed for not contributing bright and chatty news, which the public at home appreciated more than useful information and solid facts. It was perhaps pleasant for those who read, two thousand miles away, free from the attentions of these busy officials, to hear every day that a minister or a governor had been blown up by Nihilists, or that an attempt had been made to assassinate some high personage. In fact one English lady who subscribed to a " weekly horror " confessed to me that she could not enjoy her breakfast without a murder or two, which she read greedily on Sunday mornings before going to church. But there was no such mild enjoyment for the unhappy correspondent supplying these tit-bits, for he lived in fear of imprisonment or expulsion. This anxiety so told on one man I knew that he went out of his mind, while others, after undergoing the ordeal for a few months, either returned home or tried commerce for a change of occupation.

The more adventurous spirits, who loved the excitement, or wished to be of service to their country or to humanity, stuck to their harassing work for years. Some were finally expelled, others went back to their

native land, to be forgotten by those who had employed them, for whose sake they had neglected hundreds of chances of enriching themselves. A friend of mine suffered in this way, very sadly. After representing for thirty years one of the largest and wealthiest papers in England, he returned to London shattered in health, to look for an appointment. Yet, in spite of his brilliant career, and the benefits English trade, diplomacy and commerce had gained by his unceasing championship of his country's interests, and his constant defence of Englishmen in trouble in Russia, nothing worthy of his talent was offered him—not even a living wage. He was by no means the only one. In fact I know of few more ungrateful or anxious callings than that of the foreign correspondent in Russia, if bribes or opportunities of personal advantages are honourably declined—his large circle of friends gives him endless chances of making money by speculation, or other easy means.

Not all our members belonged to the self-sacrificing type of man who embraces the profession for the good he can do rather than for material gain. One of the successful men in the capital while I was there was an Italian Jew, who reported for English, French, Belgian and Italian papers! Having no scruples, and belonging to no especial nationality, he worked for any country that would employ him, and a greater cynic I never met. He looked upon the various nations with their rivalries and jealousies as so many opportunities for his own profit. Sometimes I used to meet this worthy rushing off, and would ask him what his hurry was. "I am going home to colour the news," he would reply. "'Colour the news?' What do you mean?" "Well," he would say, half apologetic, knowing that I represented one paper only, "you see I send to about six different papers, and must colour the news according to the varied taste of my

readers." Although England and France were then on the verge of war, my enterprising colleague managed to tint his information suitably to his English and French employers. Owing to his connection with so many foreign banks and papers he was the best informed of our little crowd, for the simple reason that he could afford to pay more for news than we, who only had one string to our bow, could manage. He has long ago gone to his account, and is perhaps laughing in another world at the folly of those who employed him. He used to give brilliant receptions, to which even highly placed officials came. At one of these I met Mlle ——, a voluptuous creature, sister-in-law of a powerful Minister. To her charms I might easily have succumbed had I not loved freedom rather than wealth and comfort.

All the principal London dailies were represented in Petrograd; *The Times* for many years by Mr Dobson, a conscientious, lovable and energetic man, in whose hands not only the interests of his paper, but those of his country, were safe. *The Standard* had for a long time a handsome Englishman named Baddeley who, through connections among the Russian aristocracy, was often able to gather very valuable items of exclusive information. *The Daily News* was represented by Andrew Lydken, an able journalist from Denmark, afterwards on the staff of the *Politiken* of Copenhagen. He lost his life by the explosion of a cannon while reporting some experiments with a new type of artillery. Another conscientious member of the fraternity was Mr Romanes, who eventually went under owing to the strain and anxiety of the life.

One of our most amusing friends was Braily Hodgetts, of *The Daily Graphic*, who actually "took a rise" out of our dreaded Prefect, General Gresser, the autocrat of Petrograd. The correspondence of this Englishman did not quite please the General, and the

offender was summoned into his august presence. Although mercilessly severe, General Gresser was frequently extremely polite. "Mr Hodgetts," he began, "it is very remarkable the change that comes over your communications. When you are at home in England you write the truth in your paper, but when you come here you write nonsense. How do you account for this paradox?"

"Your Excellency," replied Mr Hodgetts, not at all abashed, "I can only explain the phenomenon by the suggestion that there must be something in the political atmosphere of Petersburg which converts a truthful man into a prevaricator."

This answer was quite enough for the Prefect; from that time he asked Mr Hodgetts no more questions. Had he gone into the matter he would have perceived that the strict censorship exercised on all news leaving Russia made it absolutely impossible for any man to tell the whole truth as he knew it to be.

Once, when I was attending the fencing school at the Mechail Palace (now the Engineers' School), an officer made a somewhat similar remark to me, saying in a bantering tone: "What nonsense you correspondents write about Russia!" "If we wrote sense only," I replied, untroubled, "we should not remain at our posts twenty-four hours!"

It did not pay, generally speaking, for a correspondent to show too much zeal in his profession. I remember one who arrived full of energy, but who within six months had to leave the country. There were others, and during my time I knew about half-a-dozen who had to quit, often at twenty-four hours' notice, through having said too much and offended the authorities. Taking one consideration with another, as Gilbert might have put it, a correspondent's life is not a happy one. We had to choose between two evils—if we sent too much news home we annoyed the

censors and the officials, and if we sent too little our editors grew fractious. I once sent news that the Russian troops had violated the Afghan frontier in pursuit of some natives of that land. This stirred up the wrath of the entire Russian Press, but it could not be helped, for after Komaroff's exploits against the Afghans it was needful to be on guard that they should not be repeated. The affair came before Parliament, and the militia were called out, every preparation being made for war. But the Russian Government apologised for the incident and the storm blew over.

One of our chief difficulties lay in getting our missives across the frontier. If we posted it at the usual post office, the enclosure would go to the *chambre noire*, to be opened and read. If it was sent by wire, half of it would be excised by the courteous but vigilant telegraphic censor, whose scissors seemed a veritable sword of Damocles ever suspended above our heads. Sometimes I travelled several miles down the line to post a letter, for the gendarmes at the main station watched everybody, and, I was informed, were in the habit of going to the post office and demanding any parcel that had been posted by one of our group. We were without doubt a troublesome thorn in the side of the Russian authorities; they resented these men of the pen who chronicled their peccadilloes and published them abroad so annoyingly.

Yet I must admit that great courtesy was given to me during my ten years in the city, both by police and censors, the majority of whom were educated men who mutilated our telegrams and blacked out our papers, not from any feeling of personal spite, but simply because it was their duty as ordered by the chief officials of the Department.

After acting as correspondent for the London Press for about ten years, my career came to a sudden end. When the halfpenny papers began to compete with

the more steady, old-fashioned journals, my easy-going, non-sensational organ had not only to do away with its foreign representatives, but to reduce its price to the popular coin. To make up for the loss to my income I agreed, in an evil hour, to write for one of the half-penny sheets which, with "scare" headlines and American methods, have taken the field almost to themselves. For a time all went well. I supplied all the exciting news I could gather; but this proved inadequate—they wanted news about "what never happened," as the Russians say. When I refused to manufacture sensations for their benefit, they printed news either made "by our correspondent in Vienna" or Berlin, or as a last resource concocted in Fleet Street and published as coming from Petrograd. As I was the accredited Petrograd correspondent, I was held responsible by the officials for all these inventions. For a time nothing was said, but one morning I was summoned before the Chief Censor of the Telegraph Department for having communicated something very awful concerning the death of a Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs—in fact, according to the authorities, I had said that he was poisoned by the secretary of the Chinese ambassador! Other incriminating charges were made against me, and, to my astonishment, I was requested to leave the country within twenty-four hours. Fortunately I had kept copies of all my telegrams sent across the frontier, where I had an agent, and, thanks to this precaution and my past good record, I was eventually allowed to remain—on condition that I gave up my paper. This I was, of course, compelled to do, and I then turned to the less-exciting but safer occupation of teaching in the Government gymnasiums and schools. In this profession I remained until my return to England, after thirty years' absence, twenty-seven of which were spent in the "Holy Land of Roos."

On dismissing me, Gospoden Gretch (Mr Gretch), the courteous Chief Censor, grandson of the celebrated Russian historian, said: "I fear your new paper is not a serious journal!" To this I blushingly assented, and vowed to have nothing more to do with sensational sheets, for this was not the only pickle my enterprising editors got me into abroad during the comparatively short time I worked for them.

XXXI

THE BRITISH COLONY—ITS HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT

The British residents in Petrograd coalesced into what may reasonably be termed a colony about the time of Peter the Great. It is well known that he employed many Englishmen and Scotsmen in his army and navy, and to assist in various military undertakings, reforms and public works. In the old church at Spalding a tablet on one of the walls bears the following inscription :—

"To the Memory of Iohn Perry, Esqr in 1693 Commander of His Maiesty King Will^{ms} Ship the Cignet ; second Son of Saml Perry of Rodborough in Gloucestershire Gent & of Sarah his Wife ; Daughter of Sir Thos Nott ; K^{t}. He was several Years Comptroller of the Maritime works to Czar Peter in Russia & on his Return home was Employed by ye Parliament to stop Dagenham Breach which he Effected and thereby Preserved the Navigation of the River of Thames and Rescued many Private Familys from Ruin."

This worthy is only one of the many Englishmen who, by industry and energy, helped the Tsar to build up his new Empire and to lay the foundations of the city which bears his name. Long before his time, however, the English opened out commerce with Russia by means of the merchants of Gothland, then known as the Osterlings. These Baltic traders had their headquarters at the ancient city of Wisby, where subsequently all the money and treasures of the Goth-

landers were kept in the cellars of the Cathedral of St Maria. Evidences of the trade with Russia, especially with the regions round the Neva and the upper reaches of the Volga, are constantly met with in the shape of Anglo-Saxon coins minted in England before the Conquest, and fragments of Anglo-Saxon pottery discovered so far off as east of the government of Orenburg. The Neva was the outlet for goods brought from the East, up the Volga, and thence via Lake Ladoga to the Baltic. Most of the trade was at first in the hands of the Gothland and Swedish vikings from Roos-lagen, the large district lying between Vaxholm (near Stockholm) and Upsala, the old capital of Sweden. Later, it was taken up by the Novgorodians, who for a long time owned both banks of the Neva. But it was left to Alfred the Great to inaugurate the first trading relations with the people of Bjarmiland, on the shores of the White Sea, by sending out his ships under the command of Norwegian navigators, who supplied him with material for the earliest description of these northern lands that we have in the English tongue. He was really the first Englishman of note to recognise the possibilities of commerce with Northern Russia. There is little doubt that international relations of this kind were established long before the Conquest, and when, in 1553, King Edward VI. sent Sir Hugh Willoughby, Captain Richard Chancellor and other adventurers to traffic in the White Sea ports, he was only reopening an intercourse which, owing to Tartar invasions and political upheavals, had been broken off and for a while forgotten.

According to Johnstone's work on this subject, the young King Edward VI., who was dying of consumption, watched the heroic mariners pass out to the great unknown from the palace window at Greenwich. The majority never returned, for they were overtaken by

an early winter—the entire crews of two of the three vessels, with their commander, Sir Hugh, died of cold and starvation. But the third, under Chancellor, reached a safe bay, where it anchored. This " bay " was the White Sea, and after sending a boat ashore the voyagers learnt that " one Ivan Vasilevitch ruled far and wide in these provinces." Now this was none other than the dread Tsar Ivan the Terrible. With all his cruelty and barbarity, he fully understood the importance of cultivating friendly relations with that great maritime nation, England, which was taking the place of the old Hanseatic League and depriving it of the ruinous monopoly and power which Ivan himself had done so much to impair. Chancellor in his report mentions the Emperor's " majestic appearance, his rich robes covered with large and heavy stones," and describes the pomp and ceremony with which a nobleman (Nikita Romanoff, an ancestor of the present Tsar) set out on an embassy to Lithuania. On his return he averred that he had found another Indies. This was scarcely an exaggeration, for wealth and territory were Ivan's to an extent exceeding that of the Indies, even though the climate in many parts of his dominions was bleak, inhospitable and forbidding.

The result of the friendly intercourse between the Tsar and Queen Elizabeth, who had succeeded her invalid brother, was a treaty, by which the English merchants were allowed to establish factories at Archangel, Vologda, Narva, Moscow and later on at Kazan. Afterwards came another at Holmnegore, near Archangel, and a branch at Petrograd. This, like the factory at Archangel and Moscow, had a church supported by the ancient Russian Company, the first charter of which was granted by Ivan during the reign of Queen Mary, as can be seen by the seal of the Company at its offices in London. This Company, which was very exclusive, continued to receive various

charters from the successors of Ivan until it eventually became extremely rich and influential. In 1585 Queen Elizabeth wrote to the Emperor Theodora begging for still further privileges. The latter replied to the ambassador that the English residents constantly broke the laws of the country; that their manner of living corrupted his subjects; that they already enjoyed far greater favours than other foreigners in Russia, and that he could not exclude all other traders simply for their benefit. The "corrupt practices" mentioned probably referred to the fact that the English did not keep the fasts of the Greek Church, and ate meat during the season of Lent, when all good Russians abstain rigidly. As to the privileges, from the very first the English have been treated as a favoured nation. In the international agreements they are always termed "guests" and regarded as such. For offences that would send a native to Siberia they would only be imprisoned, or requested to leave the country. The whole time of my residence in the capital in the difficult position of foreign correspondent (tolerated, not liked) I received the finest courtesy from the censors, police and officials—not because I happened to be on the Press, but because I was a British subject. If I, whose presence the authorities tacitly resented, was treated so well, it is easy to see how pleasant is the lot of other Englishmen not connected with papers or politics.

Boris Godounoff, the Tartar usurper, who was suspected of having murdered at Ooglitch the Tsarevitch, the younger son of Ivan the Terrible, also strove to encourage trade with these islands, and rendered valuable assistance to the Russian Company. Even the weak-minded Theodor granted the English special facilities in consideration of their being the first to try the route to Archangel. The English cause, however, suffered from the imprisonment and death of its chief

friend in the Imperial Council, Nikita Romanoff, who was too powerful a rival to be permitted to remain. His sons also were all executed or imprisoned, probably at the instigation of Godounoff, who desired to seize the throne. He was full of craft, and in some ways wise enough to act up to more generous methods. He sent four young Russians to England to study, to learn, in fact, all they could about the wonderful island kingdom in which the people of Muscovy were so interested. Three of them died of small-pox at Oxford, but the survivor, Nicephorus Alfery, was ordained into the Church in 1618 and appointed to the living of Woolsey in Huntingdonshire. A direct descendant of this man, who claimed the throne of Muscovy, was for years governess to my own cousins at Normanby Grange in Lincolnshire, and the history of this offshoot of the Muscovite Tsars, who were related to Ivan the Terrible by marriage, is still in my possession.

Although Nicephorus Alfery was twice invited to return to his native land, and was offered the rank of an Imperial prince, he thought his head sat more tightly on his shoulders in this country than it would at the Court of Muscovy, and preferred to remain here as a quiet parson. He seems to have filled this office with credit, and died peacefully.

On the election of Mechail Romanoff to the throne by the will of the clergy, the boyars and the people, commerce with England via the White Sea ports was fostered in every possible way. The old charters were renewed and confirmed, and from that time Russia became one of our principal markets. During the Romanoff dynasty the two nations increased their intimacy, and more than once the Russian Company in London rendered the Russian Government signal service, not only by loans, but also by supplying cannon, arms and ammunition. When Peter the

Great began to be possessed by the idea of his new city, he abolished the rights of the Company in Archangel in order to attract trade to the fresh centre. The British factory was then removed to Petrograd, where its offices are still managed by a board of directors sitting in London. The factory then built the beautiful church on the English Quay, also another church at Cronstadt, which I have already mentioned. The one in the capital is also the church of the Embassy, and the merchant classes support it with great liberality. An excellent Congregational church is built near the post office. For many years its pulpit was occupied by the Rev. Alexander Francis, a man of eloquence and energy. While the great famine of 1891-1892 raged, he was one of the leading members of the English and American colony in Petrograd, whose efforts were the means of saving many thousands of lives in the interior. Close to this spot a young English governess was murdered by the Horse Guards one winter night, her body being hidden in the loft of their barracks. As soon as the crime was discovered, all the suspected men were shot. The Tsar (Alexander III.) was so enraged that he returned his uniform of the guilty regiment and refused ever to wear it again.

Another English church, at Alexandroffka, on the Schüsselberg road, was built chiefly for the convenience of the mill population up the river. Here the Thorntons, Hubbards, the Becks and the Nevsky Stearine Company have several large mills and factories, their managers and foremen being generally Englishmen. The Russians have of late years become so skilled in the manufacture of cloth and cotton goods, and in the knowledge of machinery, that fewer Englishmen are required in these duties than was the case some years back. In the interior I have visited mills turning out first-class stuff for the Central Asian markets that do

not employ a single foreigner—everything is Russian, even the cotton, with the exception of a small quantity imported from America. There remain still, however, some English managers who earn princely salaries—men from Yorkshire or Lancashire, sometimes mill-owners, who have made large fortunes. The wealthiest are the Hubbards, whose big mills are at Schlüsselberg. The head of this firm, who has been made a peer, has for long had much to do with the control of the Russian Company in London. The Cazalets have been in Russia ever since Peter the Great's reign. In the timber industry, the largest export houses are Oscar Steveni (formerly of Hull and Grimsby), Charles Stewart and Edward Reynolds. The English and Germans used to monopolise this trade, but every year Russian names come more and more prominently into it. Petrograd has also large breweries and oil-works, belonging to the Millers, another old English house of repute. On the Bolshoi Ochta one of the principal factories is that of Matthew Edwardes, a native of Lincolnshire, who came to Russia as a tutor, and now owns an estate at Sieverska, with extensive glass-works. He is typical of many of our countrymen who went abroad with little beyond education and character, to succeed and become wealthy. Shipping, commerce and engineering naturally claim their proportion of English. Among them may be mentioned the Johnstones, Maxwells, Wylies, Wishaws, Andersons, Hills, Howards, Merryweathers, the Tamplins of Brighton, and there are many others.

Life in the English group, both in Petrograd and Moscow, is, as a rule, very enjoyable. Most of the members are fairly well off. They show more hospitality and sociability in their daily intercourse than do their compatriots at home. Freed from the deadening effects of the strenuous existence, the struggle for life, which too often spoils Londoners for

any enthusiasms when work is done, they uphold, as do other Englishmen in our colonies, some of the best traditions of the race. There are, however, many English governesses and tutors, who generally find their places very pleasant and satisfactory; the Russians treat them as one of the family. Especially among the older nobility the aged governess or nurse who has spent her best years in bringing up and educating the younger generation is pensioned off comfortably. The old nurse, in fact, occupies much the same position as the nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*; even when her charges have grown up she has her place at the table, and is considered the adviser and friend. Ivan the Terrible would listen to his nurse, fearing her reproaches and curses, when his heart was hard as adamant towards all other human appeals. This democratic and Christian trait of character is not confined to one class, but appears beautifully in all. I witnessed a most touching example of it in the funeral of the English nurse of the late Tsar, who had watched over his youth and that of his brothers—the Grand Dukes Alexis, Sergius, Vladimir and Paul. All these, the Tsar at their head, tramped several miles through the streets, following the coffin, which they helped to bear to its resting-place in the cemetery outside the city, and a beautiful marble monument, erected by her illustrious charges, marks the spot.

So many of our countrymen have flocked to Petrograd in recent years that the profession of tutor is not half so attractive as it used to be. In other towns, however—Kharkoff, Kursk, Nizhni-Novgorod, Kazan —a good field still remains.

The present war will tend to encourage commercial relations between Russia and ourselves, but unless the English merchants bestir themselves, studying more than they have done the language and the requirements of the people, trade will again drift into the

hands of the Germans. At one time the English and Dutch held practically all the foreign trade, but the pushful Teuton ousted them with his capacity for organisation.

The English folk in the capital, prior to the outbreak of war, numbered about four thousand, most of them living on the Vasilii Ostroff or in the mill districts, some in stately houses in the suburbs. They have, of course, their own club on the Grand Moskaya, their own booksellers (Watkin & Sons), and they support several schools, a fine library, the church and a gymnasium. They have also cricket and football clubs, tennis grounds, rowing clubs, etc., and the natives are becoming extremely interested in their sports, so much so that in wrestling and games of strength they are beginning to excel. We may expect in time from this young and natural nation some of the best sportsmen in the world, particularly from the Cossacks, North Russians and Siberjaks, many of whom are men of huge stature and immense physical capacity. Winter sports appeal strongly to the English. They hold skating competitions and amuse themselves by ice-yachting, ski-ing, tobogganing or hunting bears and wolves in the forests of Novgorod and Finland ; also by shooting foxes on skis. Foxes and hares being so plentiful as to become almost a plague in some parts, this is not considered unsportsmanlike. Once these delights have been tasted, with the sense of enjoyment which is such a feature of Russian life, not many Englishmen care to return for good to their native land. Many I have known who went back, but Russia called them and they left the old home once more.

The real Russian does not love what we call sport, and cannot understand why people should go to so much exertion for no tangible gain. A Russian lady who stood by me watching a football match on the island suddenly said she would not look at it any

longer, for it was a "coarse and brutal and stupid spectacle to see young men kicking one another and hurting themselves for the sake of a leather ball." When I tried to explain that it was "sport," and good for their health, she turned on me indignantly and said: "I call it brutality and barbarism!" I was thunderstruck; but then I remembered that many of the people are, in their ideas, still half Oriental, regarding all violent exercise, except when absolutely necessary, as something to be avoided.

The English who have resided in the country for many years are regarded almost as Russians by the authorities, though they retain their nationality with jealous care. When the French ambassador was instructed by Napoleon to inform the Tsar that the English should be dismissed, as those who remained in France had all been imprisoned, Alexander replied: "Their ancestors have been here for centuries, and I certainly shall not ill use my old friends so much as to treat them as enemies. If they choose to remain in Russia, no one shall molest them!"

XXXII

KRASNOE SELO AND THE MILITARY MANŒUVRES

Everyone who is interested in military matters should visit the camp of the Guards at Krasnoe Selo (literally, "beautiful village"), where the Tsar has one of his numerous palaces. The journey is only about half-an-hour from the capital by rail.

Every summer the Guards, numbering about 200,000 men, pitch their tents on the green hills overlooking Krasnoe and carry out a great many military exercises, at which the Tsar, the Grand Dukes and the leading officers of the staff are always present. It was at this centre for practical soldiering that the crack regiments of the army became so proficient that they were able in the early days of the present war to inflict some severe defeats on certain of the finest troops of the German army, led by several of the most skilful generals in the world. The Tsar is usually mounted on a white charger, which, I believe, Alexander III. acquired from England; very carefully he reviews the various battalions as they file past. They salute their Emperor, with loud cries: "We wish your Imperial Highness health!" and in the distance the hoarse shouts sound like the subdued roar of a stormy sea beating on the shore.

The finest regiments in the Russian army take part—the Ismail, the Pavlovsk, the Semenoff and the Preobrashensk; regiments which, under Peter the Great, Souvoroff, Barclay de Toll and other leaders covered the Russian arms with glory and victory. The Preobrashensk Regiment was first formed by Peter from among his dissolute companions, who were sent

to him by his unscrupulous sister with the object of demoralising him and making him unfit to ascend the throne. But she reckoned without her host in this case, for Peter had a will of his own, and soon made it felt, with the result that those who were supposed to be able to mould his character were themselves transformed into useful men.

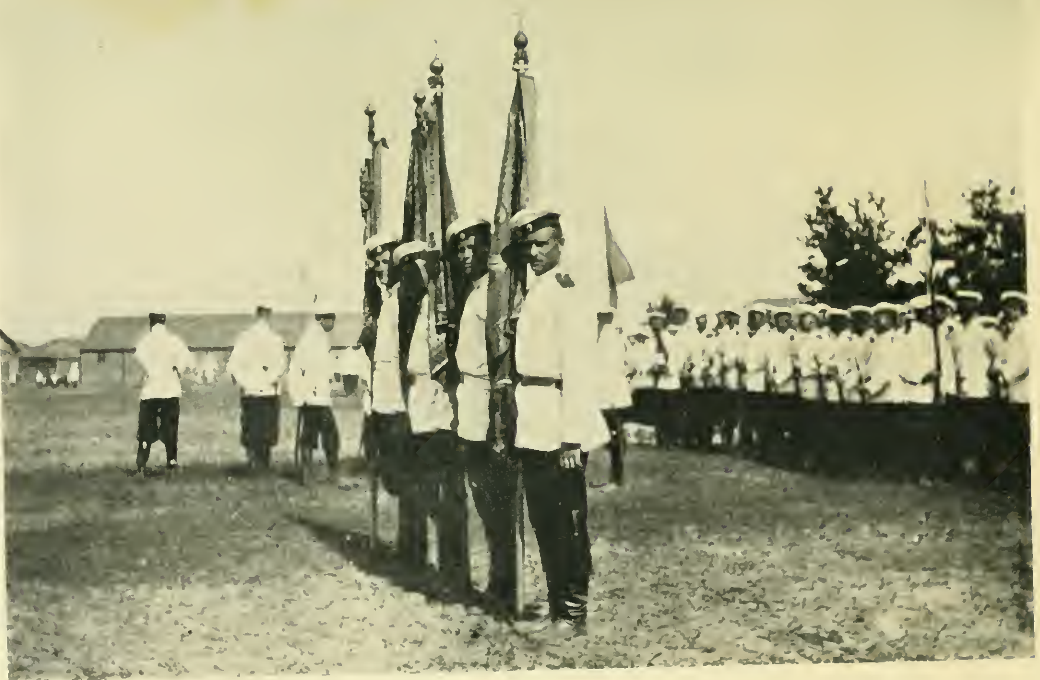
After the military exercises in the camp are completed, the autumn manœuvres begin in real earnest. They are carried through with such thoroughness and realism that the soldiers have to undergo privations and hardships as severe as would occur to them in actual warfare. It happens often that many of the weaker ones succumb to the heat and fatigue; others are drowned in the broad rivers and streams they have to cross. On more than one occasion, following these operations as foreign correspondent, I narrowly escaped being ridden down and possibly trampled to death by the Cossacks, who charge like a human avalanche, against which nothing can stand. Once when I was there the field of operations extended from Finland to Narva, a distance of several hundred miles. The Grand Duke Nicholas the Elder was present—father of the present Grand Duke of that name. He, like his hardy son, was a man of great stature, but then his face was ashen-grey, for the hand of Death was evidently upon him.

These extensive manœuvres were of the utmost importance, for they were planned on the assumption that an enemy from the south was marching through the Baltic Provinces, with the object of capturing Petrograd. Another force belonging to the same hostile army had simultaneously landed in Finland, and was also advancing on the capital by way of the northern coast of the Gulf. It was no secret that the supposed invader was Germany. After witnessing these manœuvres, and those in Western Finland, I

came to the conclusion that the Russian Government had good reason to fear an attack from this quarter by Germany, and was preparing beforehand to meet it. When war really broke out, the Germans immediately proved this true by seizing the Åland Islands, attempting to carry out this very scheme, and marching on the capital through the Baltic Provinces. They were checked, however, in the western area of war by the British army before Paris, and, having to look after themselves pretty sharply in that direction, their well-laid plans went wrong. Studying the whole situation in the light of later events, I firmly believe that they thought to conquer Paris by a sudden onslaught, and then, after levying a heavy indemnity on France, to throw all their weight against Russia by way of the Baltic Provinces.

In Finland the supposed hostile army occupied the road right up to Petrograd, but after landing near Cronstadt, amid some very severe fighting, they were driven off by the defending forces. The final battle took place just outside the city, near Krasnoe, and never shall I forget the dust, the din, the cannonade and smoke of that last engagement. In this mimic but strenuous warfare the enemy was defeated by the Imperial Guards.

The Russian Government were so convinced that this plan would be carried into effect that directly war came, thousands of labouring men were drafted into the city to dig trenches and build earthworks round it, night and day, for extravagant wages. The forests and trees near the city, which might afford cover, were cut down, and an enormous force, estimated by some at a million men, was sent to occupy Finland. But as the Germans were compelled to retreat from the neighbourhood of Paris, and the chances of serious invasion via Finland became more remote, Russia removed a great many of her best soldiers and sent them to



Russian Standard Bearers of the Guards. Grand Dukes, Officers and Soldiers in the Background

reinforce the Austrian and lower German frontiers. There is little doubt that for a time Petrograd was in danger, and there was a lively possibility that Russia would lose Finland and the command of the Baltic. According to the German Press, Germany has not completely abandoned all hope of this eastern operation, although she has already lost over 3,500,000 men in killed, wounded and prisoners. A Berlin paper printed an article by Professor Chiemann on 7th June 1915, under the heading: "Where is Russia vulnerable?" The Professor says that the final blow must be delivered against Petrograd, where everything is centred that really represents the Russian Government. "It is not sufficient to drive the Russians out of Galicia; one must take action with the aim of threatening the capital and conquering Finland." Professor Chiemann knows Russia as well as anybody, and great value is attached to his opinions, since he has been the Kaiser's instructor, and is still his good friend. If Germany succeeded, the Provinces would become a part of her Empire, and Petrograd would once more be "Petersburg"—a German city not only in name, but in reality. Lifland and Courland would again, with their memories of the prosperous and powerful Hanseatic League, become an autonomous state, with their own laws and religion as before.

XXXIII

ALEXANDER III., HIS "MUSEUM," AND THE LATE GRAND DUKE CONSTANTINE

Across the Moika, at the end of the Champ de Mars, are the precincts of the old Mechail Palace, now converted into an engineering school. The new Mechail Palace, now known as the Museum of Alexander III., is not for away, and near it is the French Theatre, where Sarah Bernhardt, Guitry and other great artists of France have triumphed. The study of the French language and literature is encouraged in every possible way. Although English is popular in the highest circles, French is the favourite among the officials. A Russian hardly considers himself as properly educated unless he can converse fluently in that tongue. German is naturally unpopular, and I heard recently that since the war began a German was fined R.3000 for daring to speak his mother tongue in Petrograd. Even before the war the Germans were so disliked that I have myself been asked not to speak the language in Russian society; but that was in Moscow, where the Panslavists and old Russian ideals and ideas are still very strong.

It was the Tsar Alexander III. who first set the example of speaking Russian instead of French at Court, and who opposed everything that tended to weaken a national spirit among his subjects. Before he ascended the throne it was quite usual to meet Russian nobles who spoke English and French well, but could hardly hold a passably correct conversation in their own language. In order to encourage Russian art, he acquired the beautiful Mechail Palace, and con-

THE TSAR ALEXANDER III—CALLED THE "PEACE LOVER"

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verted it into this Museum, where only the works of genuine native artists were exhibited. Many of those which formerly adorned the walls of the Hermitage and the Academy of Painters were hung here. About four hundred statues and pictures were brought from the Winter Palace and the palaces of Gatchina and Tsarskoe Selo. The best things in the collection are: *The Last Days of Pompeii*, by Bruloff; *The Last Supper*, *Peter I. and the Tsarevitch Alexis*, *The Marriage Kiss*, by Makoffsky; *The Cossacks*, by Rjepin; *Ermak*, by Soorekoff; and *Phryna*, by Semeradsky. There are also some splendid sculptures by Anatolsky. The Museum cost Alexander III. a fortune to found, and, as it is certainly one of the finest in the city, it should be seen by all who wish to form a good idea of what constitutes true Russian art.

Its originator, though rough and brusque, was probably the most genuinely Russian monarch who ever occupied the Romanoff throne. He loved the people, and felt that the State could be built on a firm foundation only by awakening and developing the national spirit—not by following in the steps of former rulers, who made England, France, Prussia and even little Holland their models. For the first time was heard the watchword, "Russia for the Russians," and in his brief reign the people became proud of their nationality and its own peculiar manifestations. That he was a reactionary in some things cannot be denied; but when we remember the fate of his father after he had emancipated millions of serfs and was on the point of giving the people a constitutional form of government, we can almost forgive him—though it seems hard that one hundred and eighty millions should be dragged back for the violent deed of a handful of misguided enthusiasts, the ready tools of those who hated his liberal ideas and reforms. It transpired, after the assassination of Alexander II., that a section of the

nobility, ruined by the emancipation of the wretched serfs, who by toil had supported them in idleness and luxury, were the instigators of the crime for which Risakoff paid the penalty with his life. Sophia Peroffsky, a clever noblewoman, had some personal animus against the Tsar. If I am not mistaken, she was the great-granddaughter of Count Peroffsky, the favourite Chancellor of Nicholas I., and a descendant of Catherine II. (who, by the way, left so many descendants that she has not without reason been called "the mother of her people"). Sophia Peroffsky employed her gifts very unwisely when she arranged a plot to kill the ruler who had done more for the people than any other since Vladimir sat on the Grand Ducal throne at Kieff and converted them to Christianity. My friend, Professor Turner, of Petrograd University, saw the terrible explosion, and a few years afterwards I met another victim of it—Colonel K., known as "the Tsar's watch-dog," from the fact that his duty was to accompany the Tsar wherever he went. He was severely wounded in the head by a splinter from the bomb, and for a long time hovered between life and death, until his strong constitution came to the rescue. Unfit for active military service, he was then given a post in the Criminal Investigation Department, but, as his frame was so shattered, he began to study painting and sculpture. Though over forty, he developed a most remarkable talent, and executed several excellent statues of the Tsar. On the spot of the tragedy a magnificent church, named the "Holy Resurrection of Christ," has been erected. It seems, however, sadly out of place among the classical buildings of the more modern part of the city.

The Marble Palace, on the Palace Quay, was inhabited by the Grand Duke Constantine, recently deceased. It faces the Neva and the Champ de Mars, occupying the very site where once stood Peter the

Great's old Coaching Yard. Unlike so many of the palaces, it is of stone and marble, instead of brick and stucco. It was built by the Italian architect Rinaldi, to the order of Catherine II. in 1769. In 1789 it was presented to Orloff, and the façade then bore the inscription: "The Building of Gratitude"—by which Catherine acknowledged the many favours received at the hands of her herculean lover. He never lived in it; he did not even see it completed, for he died in torment, at Moscow, from the result of his excesses. The palace was then purchased by Catherine from his heirs and given to the Polish king, Stanislaus Poniateffsky. The Emperor Paul I. presented it to his son, the Grand Duke Constantine, but he seldom occupied the luxurious building. In 1832 the Marble Palace passed into the hands of the next Grand Duke Constantine, son of Nicholas I. Until quite recently it was occupied by his son, whose death is announced as this book is on the point of going to press. The late Grand Duke was well known as a poet and man of letters. He translated the plays of Shakespeare, and himself acted in some of the leading parts. His version is considered by scholars to be excellent, showing a remarkably fine knowledge of English. He formerly held a high position as commander of the principal regiments of the Guards. At the manœuvres I have often seen him, busy and dusty, in company with the late Grand Duke Michael.

At the time of his sudden death, on 15th June, he was only fifty-six. He was the son of the Grand Duke Constantine Nicholaivitch "the Red," and nephew of the martyred Alexander II. During the Crimean War his father commanded the Baltic Fleet, and in 1863, when Poland was in revolution, was the Imperial Viceroy at Warsaw. Constantine Nicholaivitch made himself exceedingly unpopular in Government and bureaucratic circles by his liberal and progressive ideas.

He had, however, much influence over the humane, philanthropic Alexander II., and it was greatly owing to this that the Tsar was induced to liberate the serfs. When Alexander III. ascended the throne, and resolved to carry out a policy of reaction in all departments, the Grand Duke was compelled to retire from his various duties and to quit the capital. He spent his last days in the Palace of Pavlovsk. During the reign of Alexander II. I often saw this liberal-minded member of the house of Romanoff in Cronstadt, where, owing to his intense interest in the navy, he was constantly a guest of the Governor, Admiral Kazekevitch.

The late Grand Duke, Constantine the Younger, followed his father into comparative exile, devoting himself to literature, science, art and his military duties. Under the *nom de guerre* " K. Romanov " he published a number of lyrics, chiefly relating to military life, also translations. His drama, *The King of the Jews*, was forbidden by the Holy Synod, as might be anticipated, on account of its heterodox tendencies. He was elected President of the Academy of Science in 1892.

His sudden death is a great blow to Russia. Had he lived, it is quite within the bounds of possibility that he would eventually have taken the lead in the Liberal movement, and under his wise guidance the people would have had a chance of developing the great intellectual and spiritual gifts with which Nature has so bountifully provided them. In my opinion he was one of the most talented and sympathetic of the house of the Romanoffs, which for weal or woe has controlled the destinies of the Russian nation for almost three hundred years.

XXXIV

THE ENVIRONS OF THE CITY

THIS work would not be complete without some reference to the resorts near Petrograd, where the more fortunate members of the population find amusement, sport and relaxation. Every great city has its beauty-spots, and Petrograd without its exceptionally attractive surroundings would be at certain periods of the year almost insupportable.

Gatchina, a favourite summer residence of the Tsar, has a palace built by Rinaldi in 1770, in the old German style. It contains seven hundred rooms, decorated with especial simplicity. Behind it lies an immense park, containing a number of so-called "surprises"—a Roman bath, a fine pavilion, a menagerie, an obelisk, a subterranean gallery and a noted "echo."

Another easily accessible resort is Oranienbaum, a small but very picturesque town opposite the fortress of Cronstadt. I have often been glad to refresh and rest at its comfortable station after crossing the frozen Gulf—perhaps risking, as one does, being chilled to death or blown down and stunned by the whirlwinds and gales that prevail during the winter. Many followers and admirers of Father John of Cronstadt lost their lives in this way on the wild waste of snow and ice, when coming to the town to worship or to see their hero. In summer the scene is very different, and I recall happy days spent in the villas of merchant friends who make this spot their home in the hot weather. Oranienbaum was founded by Prince Menshikoff in 1711. He beautified it at an enormous

expense. Here stands the palace of the Grand Duchess of Mecklenburg, its park overlooking the Gulf and the fortress. A most lovely walk may be taken through these grounds. It was in this park that a gigantic she-bear tore and mangled a forester of the Duchess fatally. As a rule bears are good-natured animals, seldom attacking strangers unless irritated or famished, but when with cubs, as was this one, they will show fight if approached. The tragedy caused quite a sensation, I remember, in Cronstadt. Very occasionally wolves are seen in the outskirts of Petrograd, but never in the town itself. In the reigns of Peter and Catherine II. the streets at night were unsafe, both because of wild animals and men scarcely less wild.

Pavlovsk calls the more fashionable section of society at holiday-time. It also has a fine park, and splendid bands play there in the hot season. The palace, for a long time the residence of the Grand Duke Constantine the Elder, contains a library of 30,000 volumes, also a very valuable collection of paintings by Correggio, Guido Reni and other Italian masters. Here I made the acquaintance of Colonel Kirjaieff, brother of the famous Olga Novikoff, who in Gladstone's days made such a stir by championing Russia's cause in England. The Colonel was then acting as adjutant to one of the Grand Duchesses. He was a most gifted soldier, a skilled swordsman and curiously enough equally distinguished as a dialectician and theologian ; a rare combination for a military man in our days, but less uncommon among soldiers of the past. Richelieu, Ignatius Loyola, Servetius and others might be mentioned as men who were at the same time soldiers and keen theologians.

At Peterhoff the Tsar usually spends a portion of the summer. The palace is said almost to rival Versailles in its fountains and grounds. It was

THE PALACE AND WONDERFUL FOUNTAINS OF PETERHOFF, WHICH ARE SAID TO RIVAL THOSE OF VERSAILLES

founded by Peter I., who, true to his German proclivities, called it "Peterhoff"—a name now corrupted to "Petergoff" in Russian. The Russian language, like the Cockney, has no use for the troublesome letter "h." On special occasions the grassy alleys, the fountains and cascades are illuminated by thousands of coloured lights. Here Peter used to pass happy days with his miniature wife, whose tiny slipper is still to be seen in the old Dutch house which he made his home—small mansion indeed for so mighty a man! But we measure men by their characters, not by their dwellings. Close to the house stands a smaller palace, where the Empress Elizabeth used to amuse herself with "feasts of love and dinners of her own cooking"—a strange combination. Near it, again, is the little palace of "Alexandria," built by the bluff Alexander III., who, like Peter, preferred small houses devoid of pomp and display. Only once have I visited this place, for here the Tsar, surrounded by triple cordons of sentries, dwelt in cherished seclusion. The larger palace, with its gorgeous halls and vestibules, I have often visited, especially when my friend, Charles Heath, was there with the Tsar. A day at Peterhoff among its flowers and more artificial beauties is not easily forgotten; but on its attractions and historic associations, interesting though they are, I must not enlarge. A whole volume might be written on the palaces of Petrograd and its suburbs, so full are they of memories, so suggestive of former glories.

Tsarskoe Selo (the Tsar's Village) is perhaps the favourite summer residence of the royal family. This town—for it can no longer be rightly termed a village—grew from a small farm given by Peter to his charmer, Catherine. The park and grounds could not, one imagines, be surpassed anywhere in Europe. Millions must have been lavished on the place by Catherine and her successors, without reckoning the enormous cost of

the "accessories"—the Turkish baths, the "ruins," the marble gallery built by Cameron and the huge column raised to commemorate the battle gained by Orloff and the Allies at Tchesma. The magnificent saloon, the apartments gilded and decorated with glass and amber, the floors inlaid with ebony and mother-of-pearl form a dazzling sight for the English visitor, accustomed to more restrained evidences of wealth. The last time I came here I was shown, in a small alcove, the plain iron bedstead in which Alexander I. used to sleep during his campaigns, also even in times of peace. A craving for the simple life, indulged whenever possible, seems to be a peculiar trait of the Romanoffs. Since the olden days Tsarskoe Selo is like an enchanted palace robbed of its fairy princess; for such Catherine must have appeared to millions of her subjects. It still retains many attractions, however, one of the most striking being a work of art known as "The Fountain of the Broken Pitcher," representing a weeping girl standing on a rock, with a broken vessel at her feet, from which flows a stream of water. There are a few other curiosities in the grounds—pyramids, columns, statues and even a Swiss dairy farm, with some splendid cattle. The baths are of the best, and are crowded in the summer. The well-to-do classes are frequent visitors, for the bracing and healthy climate suits those who cannot stand the damp, marshy soil of the city. Some of them, in fact, live at Tsarskoe all the year round.

Tsarskoe, like Peterhoff, Gatchina and Seversky, is on the Russian side of the Gulf; Strjelna is on the Finnish shore. It is also a resort of the aristocracy. I have always preferred the Finnish side, on account of its pine forests, pretty little lakes and sandy shores; also because it is comparatively cheap. Schouvalofva, Pargolova, Ozerki, Tcherny Rjetcka, are other beauty-spots of this coast. Ozerki, noted

for its lakes, is where Father Gapon was cruelly done to death by the extreme revolutionists because of his opposition to the members of the party who advocated the reckless use of bombs to spread their propaganda. His murder—he was of Italian origin—is one of the darkest stains on the annals of the revolution, and he will always be considered as a martyr by those who are in favour of liberty and progress without recourse to violence and terrorism. Tcherny Rjetchka is another charming spot, pine-clad and sweet, where are found many villas belonging to the richer members of the English colony; boating, tennis, fishing and driving are in full swing here in the summer. Bathing is a great amusement, and as the Russians are an exceedingly natural people, bathing costumes are frequently invisible, non-existent in fact, for both sexes. Farther down the Gulf, where the inhabitants are pure Finns, the folk, after half boiling themselves in the bathing-houses attached to almost every cottage, will sally out into the snow and roll over and over in delight, apparently with no evil results. What Mrs Grundy would do among these primitive people I have no idea. Judging from her antics in England, her home, she would perish of shock. When last in Finland, on the way to Wiborg, I came to a cross-road and was puzzled which direction to take. Pulling up my sledge, I saw three Finnish girls, absolutely in the costume of Eve, sitting on a gate—and this in midwinter—cooling off in the open before rushing back to their beloved *banja*, or scalding hot bath. In reply to my question, without a blush they showed me the road to Wiborg by pointing with one hand over their shoulders, hiding their breasts with the other. My companion, an Englishman, was astounded at their "immodesty" (of course it was nothing of the sort), or pretended to be; while even I, who knew the ways of the land, was not a little surprised at the unexpected apparition.

Wiborg is a popular place with the Petrogradians, many of whom have villas in the neighbourhood. The more wealthy, however, pass much time at Imatra. Before the River Wuoksonista, flowing from Lake Saima to the Gulf, reaches the sea, it forms a number of dangerous rapids. These are famous for salmon-trout, and I have known a good angler to catch as much as three poods' weight (120 lb.) in one evening. Overlooking the falls, an enterprising Finn has erected a fine hotel, where many of the English and Russian merchants often stay. The late Tsar, with Charles Heath, passed much of his summer holidays fishing at this spot, and the Fishing Club has many noted members of society.

Hunting elk, wolves, bears, foxes and other animals takes some of the spare time of the leisured young men of the capital; but on the whole better sport is found in the forests south of the city, though the woods of the Grand Duchy are not to be despised.

It will be seen that although Petrograd has a poor climate, with seven long months of winter, this fair city on the banks of the Neva has many compensating attractions for those who by choice or through business reasons make it their habitation. I for one do not in the least regret the years I spent in the place, and one always remembers that it owes its wonderful existence and history to the genius, foresight and indomitable will of one man.

In saying farewell to Petrograd, let me in these last words thank all who made my sojourn there so pleasant and express the hope that those who are induced to visit Russia's capital may have as happy and eventful a time.

THE GRAND DUKE MICHAEL, THE TSAR'S BROTHER, AT THE FRONT

CHARACTER SKETCH BY A RUSSIAN CORRESPONDENT

In view of the possibility that the Grand Duke Michael may succeed to the throne of the Romanoffs, owing to the delicate health of the present young Tsarevitch, the following character sketch is of much interest, the more so as it is written by one who knows him intimately. Describing the Grand Duke's appearance and activity at the front, this correspondent writes :

What a hearty, harmonious, even rhythmic precision is observable in his movements. He is a truly muscular figure—a sportsman of the real English type. There is also something English in the cut of his light linen jacket, ornamented with the epaulets of a general, and bearing the Cross of St George. His soft, searching eyes gleam from a pale, ivory-white face, but this clean-shaven, striking countenance has the look of perfect health.

The Grand Duke has a noble soul, as may easily be seen in everything he does, in each phrase, glance or gesture. He is a man of the most pronounced sincerity, which is emphasised by his simplicity. Thus he is especially alive to anything in the nature of a pose, to hypocrisy and deception.

Bearing this in mind, it may be easily understood that after several journeys to Germany his Imperial Highness received from the inhabitants of that country an impression of persistent egotism. "The Emperor Alexander III., my father," he observed, "with deep wisdom guessed and understood the hypocritical

tendencies of German policy, and once and for all set it down at its true value. He gauged its worth, and from that time consistently arranged his future relations with the young Empire according to the strongly defined impression it had made upon him." The Grand Duke decided, therefore, to bring to naught as far as might be the proud, aggressive plans of Germany.

"She imagined," he said, "that in two or three short months she would crush us and our Allies, and then dictate Draconic terms of peace to the conquered. But despite all her technique, her skill and preparedness, she has made a cruel mistake. Of all her grand schemes only fragments remain. Germany, until recently so powerful, has suffered a wound that is well-nigh fatal. The loss of her colonies, the ruin of her commercial hegemony, her terrible sacrifices in men—all these are injuries which cannot soon be healed, and the successes of the combined Austro-German armies will have little influence upon the ever-threatening catastrophe that awaits her."

The words of the Grand Duke seem to be inspired. His quiet, manly strength is supported by his faith in the certain final victory of Russia and her Allies.

His Imperial Highness is beloved by all the commanding officers for his courage. He has covered himself and his division with glory, in this respect bearing a strong resemblance to the brave King of the Belgians. He is nearly always in the most advanced positions, often being found in the firing line not only of the heavy cannon, but of the machine guns and rifles. He keeps perfectly calm, and heartens the soldiers in the trenches with gentle and winning words. The Caucasian mountaineers, who set great value on personal courage, absolutely idealise their leader, with unrestrained, purely Mohammedan fatalism. Among themselves, he is affectionately called

"Our Mechail." Enthusiastic letters are written about him to their relatives in the far distant villages, every letter reminding its recipient of the good fortune of fighting under the command of the Tsar's own brother! All his leisure moments, when not engaged in studying maps in his rooms, consulting with his chiefs of the staff, or in the multifarious other duties pertaining to his rank, the Grand Duke spends in the military positions; he knows all his officers even to the young ensigns, by name. He has the soul of a saint; in fact he is called a saint by the officers of his division, and each one is ready to follow him to the death.

As regards our positions (continues this correspondent), imagine to yourself the steep banks of a large river. One shore is shrouded in twilight, its outlines softened and dim, and silent figures in their Caucasian uniforms pass to and fro. Lower down, on the slope, is a labyrinth of wire entanglements, invisible in the gloom, but nevertheless to be felt. On the other higher, steeper shore, it is the same with the Austrians. Suddenly a group of men appears. Picture the scene: it is the Grand Duke in company with the commandant of the brigade and his adjutants. His Imperial Highness politely questions the officers, listening attentively as each in turn gives his impression of the day's fighting and of the positions which he occupied with his section. Gradually they form a merry, animated bivouac. Being hungry, the Grand Duke sits down on a felt coat and eagerly eats the *shashlike* (pieces of meat roasted on skewers over a fire) which has been prepared by one of our horsemen. His own ensign, Volkoff, hero of many breakneck encounters and reconnaissances, is there, and over the fragrant samovar of tea Volkoff is asked to relate the details of his last exploit, in which he earned the St George's Cross. "Your Imperial Highness," says Volkoff,

"will you have a glass of tea?" It is accepted. The ensign beams with joy, and says: "Now I will send this samovar and this glass to my home, as two family treasures." So unaffectedly is this said that none could be offended.

In the principal street of the little Galician town behind the wire entanglements stands a small house resembling a foreign villa. This is the headquarters of the Grand Duke. Before it a sentry of the Imperial Convoy paces to and fro with regular steps. The office and the sleeping quarters are all in one room. It is light and spacious, and in one corner stands a narrow camp bedstead, with a small table bearing an icon of an old design. The Grand Duke works at a large writing-desk. Everything is of the simplest, severe, giving almost the impression of a cell; but it is the cell of a warrior monk. The next apartment is the dining-room, with open windows protected by muslin screens from the flies. Through the screen ever and anon appears the figure of the sentry on guard. Breakfast consists of but two courses; as a rule the Grand Duke drinks only water, but sometimes when toasting a friend's health he takes a little mead. He is a merry host, lively and interesting. At table, besides the ordinary suite, there is generally some specially invited guest. Conversation does not flag; his Highness is a delightful raconteur, and capably takes his part whatever subject is discussed. In giving his views on the war, in his estimate of the latest literary productions, in his recollections of many encounters and descriptions of episodes of various battles —in everything he touches upon you may remark the presence of a sharp, observant, witty mind, illumined by artistry and humour. He is fond of a joke, and made much fun of the attempt of the Prince of Wied to occupy the throne of Albania. This penetrating humour is seen also in the caricatures that decorate

the walls and doors of his dining-room; the *genre* and political sketches, the firmness of the lines, tell of something more than the talent of the mere amateur. *En passant,* we may mention that the Grand Duke is a clever photographer. Among the hundreds of splendid photographs he possesses, his choice of themes shows the standpoint of the artist.

With modest and simple affection he loves everything Russian, and the country itself—the retiring villages, the wide plains radiant in the evening sun, when the distant horizon grows dim, and the quail, hidden in the meadows, utters his loud, shrill challenge.

On his religious side, the Grand Duke reminds one of a mediæval monk of Moscow—which city, it must be said, always holds a warm place in his heart. One may especially learn to know a man during his hours of devotion. When campaigning, he never misses a service, and the worship of God thus naturally harmonises with his entire personality. The temple may be a grass plot set in a field of waving rye. The priest, in his sacerdotal golden vestments, serves zealously amid the singing of the soldiers' choir, and the congregation consists of a crowd of our grey-coated heroes. In front is the tall figure of the Grand Duke, absorbed in prayer.

In concluding these notes of this bright personality, we must not omit to record his abilities as a sportsman. With justice, the Grand Duke is considered one of the best cavalrymen in the Russian army. A splendid rider in the field, he knows his horse to perfection and has an irreproachable seat. Active, and accomplished in gymnastic exercises, he possesses surprising physical strength, especially in the fingers. He can tear a pack of cards into four parts, first in half, then again across. This strength is inherited from his late father, the Emperor Alexander III., who could roll up a silver plate in his hands, and break a copper coin in two.

It should not be forgotten that many of the excellent qualities and principles of the Grand Duke are due to the fine training of his late English tutor, Mr Charles Heath, M.A., of Oxford, who also acted as tutor to the Tsar. The bluff and hearty Mr Heath was also a good sportsman, honest and reliable, with an intense love of art, and these tastes have without doubt had much to do with moulding the character of the Grand Duke Michael.

As there is a possibility of this member of the royal house succeeding to the throne, should the Tsarevitch not recover from his present state of ill health, the people of Russia are fortunate in having such a prince as this possible future Tsar ; the more so as a ruler with such fine qualities cannot fail to be a source of great happiness to the nation he may some day be called upon to govern.

A NOTE ON THE GROWTH OF THE RUSSIAN EMPIRE SINCE THE DAYS OF PETER THE GREAT

In my work on *The Russian Army from Within*, published this year, I have shown how important a factor in war and politics is the fecundity of the women, and in the East especially of the Slav women. When Peter the Great visited England, about two hundred years ago, the population of the Empire of Muscovy was only 14,000,000 ; now, owing to wars of conquest and the above factor (too often lost sight of by historians), it stands at 185,000,000.

Should Russia during the present campaign lose 2,000,000 men killed, which is an improbably high estimate, her population next year will be still about 186,000,000, since every year she has an increase of, roughly, 3,000,000 souls. Every fifty years the population of the Empire doubles, in spite of the enormous death-rate, which in many governments is from 50 to 60 per 1000, and at the present rate of increase the numbers by the year 1965 should be 370,000,000, even if Russia does not annex the Slavonic states of Austria and carry out the Panslavist programme—which means that all Slavs should come under her rule or influence, although the Muscovites are not pure Slavs, but to a great extent are of Tartar origin.

During the reign of Peter, the first census was taken by his orders. The following table shows the growth of the nation since his day, despite constant wars, revolutions, epidemics, famines and other calamities,

none of which seem to affect seriously the marvellous vigour, endurance and fertility of the people :—

1722, First Census, by order of Peter the Great	14,000,000
1742 . .	16,000,000
1762 . .	19,000,000
1782 . .	28,000,000
1796 . .	36,000,000
1802 . .	37,000,000
1812 . .	41,000,000
1815 . .	45,000,000
1832 . .	58,000,000
1835 . .	60,000,000
1851 . .	68,000,000
1858 . .	74,000,000
1860 . .	76,000,000
1870 . .	85,000,000
1880 . .	100,000,000
1890 . .	119,000,000
1900 . .	135,000,000
1910 . .	155,000,000
Probable result of Census in the year 1920 .	195,000,000
Probable result of Census in the year 1930 .	200,000,000

If we assume that Russia will neither lose nor gain in possessions, but will continue to increase her numbers in the same ratio, by 1985 her population will stand at about 400,000,000. Should she succeed in obtaining Galicia and Bukhovina, and the other Slav territories of Austria, according to the desires of the Panslavists, it will be more like 500,000,000, especially as the Slovjaks and many other Slav races, owing to their high birth-rate and superior knowledge of hygiene, increase even more rapidly than their Russian kinsmen. When

we remember that the Germans only increase at the rate of 900,000 per annum, the English at the rate of 350,000, and that the population of France is practically stationary, the future of Europe, it seems, must depend on the Russian Empire and the Balkan States, unless the various Germanic races—the English, Scandinavians, Dutch, Germans, Austro-Germans—forget their differences and unite before they are overwhelmed by the rising wave of Slavonic fertility.

SOME AUTHORITIES REFERRED TO FOR THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

Russia, by Mackenzie Wallace.
The Writings of Catherine II.
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Russian Flashlights, by Joseph Prelooker.
Capitals of the Northland, by Ian C. Hannah.
The Works of Nicholas Gogol.
Around the Kremlin, by Lowth.
Istorecheske Otcherkee Razskaze, by Shoobensky.
Stary Peterbourg, by M. E. Pylaieff.
Paul the First of Russia, by K. Walizeffsky.
The Comedy of Catherine II., by Francis Gribble.
Rossija (Devrien's Edition), *Petrograd*, and other works mentioned in the text.

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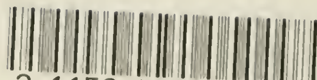
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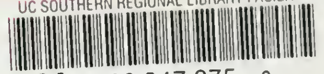
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