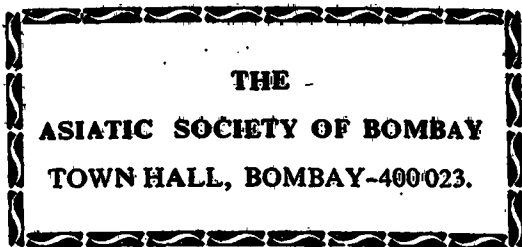


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NOTES

OF A

NINE YEARS' RESIDENCE
IN RUSSIA, A A 2 3

FROM 1844 TO 1853.

WITH NOTICES OF THE TZARS

NICHOLAS I. AND ALEXANDER II.

BY

ROBERT HARRISON.

LONDON:

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TO
AUSTEN HENRY LAYARD, Esq. M.P.

ETC. ETC. ETC.

THE PUBLIC MAN,

ON WHOM,

IN THE PRESENT CRISIS, THE EYES OF ALL ENGLAND ARE
MOST EARNESTLY AND MOST HOPEFULLY FIXED,

This Book

IS RESPECTFULLY DEDICATED,

AS A MARK OF HÖMAGE

DUE TO HIS GREAT TALENTS, UNWEARIED ENERGY,
AND FEARLESS PATRIOTISM,

BY HIS

SINCERE ADMIRER AND VERY OBEDIENT SERVANT,

THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE.

THE substance of the following "Notes" is taken from the Author's Journals. Assisted by a lively remembrance of the scenes he passed through, he has given these memoranda such form and coherence as they were capable of assuming.

Many interesting facts and circumstances which he had noted down, are necessarily omitted in this little work, inasmuch as they have been already well told to the English public by other writers on Russia. But what had not already been seen in print, it seemed a kind of duty to publish, now that an acquaintance, more or less intimate, with the Russian Empire is sought by every Englishman. The humblest contribution to a knowledge of that remarkable country must acquire additional interest and value with every new event that marks the progress of the present war. Trusting that he may at least claim the merit of a sincere desire to record exactly what he saw and heard, the

Author commits his book to the indulgence of his readers.

The first portion of the work describes the course of the writer's travels and the incidents accompanying them. The second part, commencing with Chapter V., contains his impressions of the national characteristics, and for the sake of greater clearness is arranged in the following order :

- I. The Moojiks or Peasants, who form the substratum on which the social edifice of Russia reposes.
- II. The Svestchenniks, their spiritual pastors.
- III. The Pameshtchiks, their owners.
- IV. The Chinovniks, or civil functionaries, their oppressors; Grajdanun or citizen.
- V. The Military, their protectors and controllers.
- VI. The Tzar, their Demigod.

The illustrations are selected from original drawings made on the spot, and will, it is hoped, from their truth and character, materially assist the reader to form his own conclusions on the external appearance of the Russians.

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NINE YEARS' RESIDENCE IN RUSSIA.

CHAPTER I.

First glimpse of Russian Character—After dinner customs—Marechal Sebastiani—Napoleon and Fontainebleau—Assiduity of Russian officers—Nicholas—King of Prussia—Eothen—Similarity of Russ and Bohemian tongue—Culm—Tilsit—Liberty of opinion—Riga—Reval—Count Heyden—Russian Roads and Horses—Datchas—Alexander's Arch—Barrier—Petersburgh—Nevsky—Sledges—Coachmen—Neva River—Quays—Public Buildings—Moonlight—Ice—Sign-boards.

IT was in Paris that I first became acquainted with Russians. I was at once struck with the courtliness of their manners, and the magnificencé of their style of living. In one of the splendid houses in the neighbourhood of the Tuileries, in apartments richly decorated and hung with flowered satin I found the family to which I had introductions. The entrance hall was filled with servitors belong-

ing to nearly all the nations in Europe, and their intercourse with their master soon afforded me an opportunity of witnessing the marvellous facility which a Russian gentleman displays in the management of foreign languages: My young ears were confounded at hearing the Englishman, Frenchman, German, Italian and Russ, addressed each in his respective tongue by one individual, whose English and French (the only languages of which I could then judge) were certainly unexceptionable. From what I now know of the Russian character, I feel convinced that this linguistic display was made in my presence for the purpose of producing an effect upon me, humble personage though I was. The Russian always acts a part before strangers and before those people from whom he wants to gain some small advantage. To do this is so habitual with him that he cannot do otherwise, and many a fine trait of character, that I shall be able to set forth in these pages, may partly lose its value from the conviction forcing itself upon the observer's mind, that the Russian world is really a stage and all its men and women

merely players, constantly seeking theatrical effect, and flattering themselves that they deceive the world by their superior dissimulative skill.

The Russian families that I saw in Paris, belonged to *la haute volée*, and exhibited none of those characteristics of dirty splendour—no costly jewels on grimy hands—that were once attributed to the Muscovite nation in the popular mind of Western Europe. On the contrary all was elegance and fashion. Dinner, for instance, was served on solid silver, in one house that I was acquainted with, and works of art in painting and sculpture, together with rare articles of virtù were accumulated without regard to cost. The best Parisian society assembled at their luxurious tables, where the refinement of Parisian manners prevailed. On one occasion, however, I witnessed an anachronism in the usages of society, that in Paris was certainly startling. Dinner being over, a venerable looking Russian gentleman of the old school, rose solemnly from his seat and after making the customary sign of the cross, which answers to our grace after meat,

he bowed with the most profound gravity and respect first to the hostess, then to the host, and finally to the various members of the family. On reaching the drawing room, whither all the guests of both sexes retire at the same time, the old Russian kissed the hand of the lady of the mansion. I may here add as the result of subsequent experience, that this custom of returning thanks after meals to the human as well as to the Divine giver of the food, is almost universal in Russia, and that the practice is inculcated by parents on their children as a sacred duty. However strange and farfetched such a custom may appear, it helps to confirm the grand lesson which all Russians live to learn—submission to authority.

Among the intimates of one Russian family that I saw much of at Paris, was the late Marèchal Sebastiani, who as one of Napoleon's generals and a fellow Corsican, a favorite moreover with Louis Philippe, was a personage of great interest to us. He was short in stature and of slight make, and spite of the stern expression of his face, there was a bright intelligence in his eye and a symmetry of features

that still told of the good looks which, it is said, were instrumental in starting him in his career of fortune. I mention him here for the sake of introducing an anecdote that bears upon a disputed historical fact. An expedition was formed with the Marshal at its head to explore the ancient Palace of Fontainebleau. I was of the party, and a very delightful one it was. In passing through the room that Napoleon used to occupy, a Russian gentleman present asked Sebastiani if it were true that the Emperor, for so he spoke of Napoleon, had attempted to poison himself there. "Too true," was the veteran's reply, and his eyes filled with tears.

•To one born several years after the general peace and regarding the actors in the last war as entirely of a past age, it was extremely interesting to sit at a table with men who had commanded opposing forces in the great Russian campaigns of 1812 and 1813, and to hear a French Marshal quietly discussing the events of those campaigns with a Russian General. Great deference was shewn to the Marshal by all the Russians of our circle, a deference paid, I presume to his military capacity, for most of

the latter were military men, and some of them seemed eager to increase their professional knowledge. One officer of the artillery, whose name I see now occasionally figuring in the *Times*, was most assiduous in his attendance upon an "Exposition," then open in Paris, pursuing with eager interest every inventive suggestion that promised advantage to his profession.

From Paris I accompanied my Russian friends to Berlin. Here I saw for the first time the Tzar Nicholas, returning from that brief visit to England, which was destined to bear him such bitter fruits in the latter days of his reign. Even then he was in deep sorrow, having been hastily summoned to the dying bed of his favourite daughter. It would be impossible ever to forget the impression his appearance stamped upon my mind. The massive and stately figure; that has been so often described, the stern, melancholy face, with cold, grey, impenetrable eyes, which seemed rigorously to exclude every expression of the inward emotion, made the gazer feel that here was a man isolated from his kind by the proud eminence he had been doomed to occupy. It

is difficult to conceive how those impassive orbs ever could appear the "mild eyes," which have lately become a byword. Yet that in his lofty isolation Nicholas has always left room for the play of his common human nature, in the indulgence of domestic affection, the following anecdote, gathered from authentic sources at the period now alluded to, goes far to prove.

On reaching St. Petersburg, after a journey of extraordinary rapidity even for him, the Tzar found that little hope was entertained of his daughter's recovery. He was informed that an interview with the Princess in the condition she was then in, might prove dangerously agitating to her. Ordering his couch, therefore, to be made up on a sofa in her apartment, screened from her view, he passed sleepless hours in listening to her moans and to the words that were to prove her last. While there, he heard her ask for his portrait, and addressing it tenderly as her "Dear Papa," with many expressions of the affection she felt for a most indulgent parent, request that it might be placed in her coffin. The scene was too much for the iron man, and this descen-

dant of the Great Peter fainted as he lay listening.

While I was at Berlin, the King of Prussia was spoken of very contemptuously by the Russians, and his attachment for the widow *Cliquot*, whose champagne bottles have afforded Mr. *Punch* so much amusement, was the subject of unreserved allusion. A German, eminent in science and letters, and of European reputation, was pointed out to me as his Majesty's boon companion, and the rubicund tint of his face did certainly not belie the imputation.

No great number of Russians were to be seen at Berlin, the place does not suit them so well as Paris, gravity of thought and extent of learning have few charms for such pleasure seekers. Near Potsdam there still exists the Russian village planted by the Emperor Alexander at the desire of the late King of Prussia, but if one may judge from the priest with whom I conversed at some length, the colonists must have become thoroughly Germanised by this time.

Leaving Berlin for a secluded Bohemian val-

ley, I there found the Muscovite gentry and merchants in considerable force, they being drawn thither by the fame of the mineral waters. Here I first saw the hero of Satalieh, whom Mr. Kingslake has immortalised in the last chapter of *Eothen*, and who, bellicose as is his aspect there, now exercises the most peaceable functions as one of the imperial ministers at St. Petersburg. When *Eothen* was published, he was all the more shocked at the work, as it contrasted so strongly with his own "Pilgrimage to Jerusalem," published shortly after; wherein his Excellency does not fail to invest the holy city with Russo-Greek robes of sanctity, and to claim the keeping of the too famous key for the orthodox Greek priests. Other Russian notabilities had been drawn to the healing waters of this "mountain cauldron," and some Austrians of rank, an archduke and an archbishop among others. As an illustration of manners, the joke of a merry old German prince may not be misplaced. He told the archbishop with a peculiar rollicking sort of glee, that in church he stood near the archduke and overheard him praying that "all arch-

bishops, bishops and priests might be sent to lodge anywhere but at a watering place where archdukes came to take their pleasure." From all I heard and saw, the young imperial highness did not suffer much from ecclesiastical restraint, however many dignitaries might be in his neighbourhood.

Though the Russians and the Tchechs, or Bohemians, are members of the same Slavonic family who have been long estranged from each other, we found upon trial that their languages retained enough of similarity to be intelligible to persons of both nations.

With a certain kind of appropriateness, as if to impress us with an idea of the military greatness and glory of the country upon which we were entering, our road lay through the grand battle-plain of Culm in Saxony, where the French General Vandamme was made prisoner by the Russians, after a contest in which the stedfast courage of their troops was conspicuously displayed. One of the regiments nearly destroyed on this occasion, the Pavlovsky, wore and still wears a curiously shaped hat, something like a broken sugar-loaf, faced with a gilt

spread-eagle, from which the French named the regiment, "les bonnets d'or." A peculiar and not inexpressive mark of honour conferred on the *braves* of this regiment at the present day, in remembrance of former feats of arms, consists of the hats, pierced with bullets in that terrific fight, and inscribed with the names of every successive wearer.

The approach to the Russian frontier from Berlin is unattractive in the extreme. It requires the historical associations of the great German and Polish wars to impart any interest to the four broad rivers, which the traveller must cross on this route—the Oder, the Vistula, the Niemen and the Duna. The effect of sandy plains, grim pine forests and swampy flats, which alternately present themselves, is but little relieved by the dirty crowded villages of Jews which from time to time meet the eye. Their appearance and costume indeed, so oriental and so ill suited to the country and climate in which they here live, might give rise to moral reflections upon the fate and history of the dispersed people, such as Monmouth Street would certainly never suggest. At Tilsit where we

crossed the Niemen, not a trace remains to speak of that famous interview of the two Emperors in the middle of the stream, which was meant to decide the fate of Europe, and on which later events are so singular a comment. As I crossed the frontier, the moon was rising over the dominions of the Tzar, whilst the sun shed a parting flood of light over all that was visible of Prussia, yet notwithstanding the calm beauty of the scene, I felt an involuntary sinking of spirits, as the barrier fell behind me like an instrument of execution, severing me as I thought from all that was European and free, to enclose me in the Asiatic bondage of an Autocrat. Indeed, I may say, that, although I always enjoyed as much personal liberty there as I do in my own country, the sense of feelings and opinions suppressed, in myself and in those around me, became at last insupportable, and was one strong motive for my quitting Russia and the many kind friends, whom I count it my privilege still to retain in that country.

Not many genuine Russians are to be seen in the Baltic Provinces of the Empire, for those

who by appointment or other means, are settled among the German inhabitants of those regions, acquire with a facility that is truly national, the habits and to a certain extent the ideas of their Teutonic fellow subjects. How it comes to pass that these latter, with their traditions of ancient independence and glory, should be the class from whom the Tzars have obtained some of their most devoted servants and most passive tools, is an historical problem that I can hardly undertake to solve. To the truth of the fact many notorious names will testify.

Riga is the capital of these German provinces, and its streets animated with bustling passengers still betoken a certain amount of commercial activity, notwithstanding the jèalous policy which permits the sand to accumulate at the mouth of the port, in order to damage the trade of this rival of St. Petersburg. It is said that if Peter I. had gained the battle of Narva in 1700, Riga would have become the metropolis of Russia, and the swampy banks of the Neva would have remained undisturbed. What would in such a case have been the operation of Russian influence upon Europe, might

be made the subject of a curious speculation.

Reval, to which we diverged for the sake of a little sea bathing, is a miserably dull and dreary city ; everything about it looks old yet not venerable, from the decrepid lime trees in Catherinenthal to the decaying churches and houses within the town itself. That charming book "Letters from the Baltic" has exhausted nearly all the points of interest about Reval and its environs, the Esthonian inhabitants and their German lords. During my stay there, I had the opportunity of seeing something of the late Port-Admiral of Reval, the gallant old Count Heyden who had commanded the Russian squadron in the battle of Navarino. He was by birth a Dutchman but had passed nearly the whole of a long life in the service of Russia. To me he seemed the living picture of a naval hero. In person tall, strong and hearty-looking, he was at once frank and courteous in manner, keen in observation, and rich in that expressive eloquence which is a seaman's characteristic. He took us one day in his twelve-oared shallop to visit some of the

vessels in the harbour. His demeanour towards the sailors on board was quite fatherly ; he singled out those who had been with him, on active service for some special observation, and we witnessed with much interest his "rencontre" on board one pet little craft which he had named Navarino, with a sailor who had been engaged in that battle. The appearance of the ships we visited was extremely neat, even elegant, and the only marks of disapproval the Admiral exhibited, were directed against what he called the fopperies of the new school of seamen. He spoke English fluently, and had a professional liking for the nation. His sailor-like mode of announcing rain by saying there was a "leak in the sky," was very characteristic of the man.

The journey from Reval to St. Petersburg is all the more tedious in autumn for want of good roads. Not until you reach the Emperor's highway between Peterhof and the capital, can you hope to advance with less than six horses to the carriage. Miserable little nags indeed they are, these so called horses in rope harness, with a ragged postillion for the two leaders, and

a dirty shaggy-haired driver behind the four shaft horses. By dint, however, of screaming out caresses and curses at the poor steeds, they make them accomplish the tedious process of dragging you through the mud, and then break out into a wild song, whose piercing notes, accompanied by the tinkling bells on the collars, do anything but promote the traveller's repose. At Strelna, about 18 versts (12 miles) from St. Petersburg, we first came upon a fine macadamized road. A similar highway extends in a direct line from Taurogen, on the frontier, to the capital, but we had missed it by making the *détour* to Reval. At Strelna may be seen the large and rich convent of St. Serge, in the cemetery of which only wealthy people can be buried, if we may judge from the splendour of the monuments with which it is crowded. As we advanced along the road the eye was everywhere met by increasing evidence of the proximity of a great city. Detached country villas line the side of the road overlooking the gulf of Finland. Those which I first saw were large and separated by extensive grounds, but the nearer we approach the city, the smaller and

more thickly set do they become, till at last their appearance was that of a street of fanciful little wooden houses, with verandahs leading into the smallest possible patch of garden shaded by one, two, or three hanging birch trees. These country boxes or *datchas* as they are called, may be seen on all the roads leading into St. Petersburg, on the suburban banks of the Neva, and on the islands made by the branches of the river. They testify to a practice almost universal in Russian cities, that of making a change of residence (*datcha* means change) during the summer months. From June to September when the weather is very hot, all these houses will be found occupied by people of every rank, from the poor official who pays his 30 roubles* for the season, to the wealthy merchant or noble, paying his 300, or possessing a mansion of his own. As every tenant must take his own furniture, the city in spring presents the appearance of a universal "fitting,"

* A silver rouble is worth rather more than three shillings English, so that 100 roubles = £15. and some shillings; 1000 roubles = £150. to £160. according to the rate of exchange.

which the stranger newly arrived is at a loss to understand, and which for a long time puzzled me completely.

After passing through a double line of *datchas* or country houses, we drive under the triumphal arch of bronze, erected by Alexander to commemorate the return of the Russians from Paris, in 1815. Here at the guard house the passports are examined, and we drive into the interminable city. The inspection of passports at Russian guard houses once filled me with a certain amount of trepidation, lest anything treasonable to the state should unconsciously cling about me; but I soon found out how goodnatured the inspecting *chinovnik* was; and how naturally he took a twenty copeck* piece in exchange for the countermark required by the sentinel, without my showing the pass at all. This ceremony is of course only gone through by travellers easily distinguished from occupiers of *datchas*, who pass on unchallenged by the guard.

The great city itself has been so often and

* 100 copecks = 1 rouble, therefore 20 copecks is worth about 8d.

so well described, that few words on the subject from me will suffice. Like the Pharaohs of Egypt, the Muscovite Tzars in their architectural undertakings have had to deal with vast level plains, on which they found it necessary to erect edifices of extraordinary size, and if Petersburg has not its pyramids, it may boast of some of the largest houses perhaps in Europe. The number of buildings constructed by and for the Government in every Russian town, but particularly in the capitals, is remarkably great; barracks, military schools, ministerial bureaux, and all the public offices necessary to a system which governs seventy millions of people by the mystery of routine and red tape. The streets of Petersburg are very wide, and very straight, showing that this city, unlike the other cities of Europe, which have grown from small to great, subject to the caprices of successive generations of men, was built upon a plan conceived by one mind, just as the cities of Adelaide, Auckland, and other colonial capitals have been in our own day.

The effect of this, however stiff, is very imposing, and the Nevsky Perspective is un-

doubtedly the finest street in Europe. The canals, which intersect the principal streets of the city, not only serve in summer for the transit of boats and barges, but become in winter firm and delightfully smooth roads for sledges. After the dulness of Berlin I was much delighted with the active bustle that prevailed in Petersburg. Vehicles of every description, from the light droschky of the dapper shopkeeper to the four-horsed carriage of the titled dame, rattle through the streets at full speed. In winter wheels disappear, and the luxurious sledge whirls over the snow with a rapidity that seems to threaten the safety of the heedless pedestrian, who may attempt to cross the street without carefully looking both ways. The penalties, however, consequent upon accident, are very severe, and as the cry of "berygese," take care—resounds through the air, the stranger is led to perceive the reasonableness of the maxim which demands, as a quality essential to a good coachman, the lungs of a stentor.

My favourite walk in St. Petersburg was the quay, extending for more than two miles in a straight line along the beautiful river Neva.

The continuity of the line is broken in one place, by the enormous quadrangular structure called the Admiralty, which covers about as much space as one of the London squares, and divides the quay into two parts, called respectively the Court quay and the English quay. The quay itself formed of smoothly-cut blocks of granite, and kept clean and sanded in all weathers, makes a handsome promenade in front of nearly all the palaces of the imperial family, which conjoined with the lofty mansions of the nobility, form one vast pile of splendid structures. These stand on the south bank of the Neva; on the opposite side is seen the citadel, separating two broad arms of the river—one of which flows round the delta, constituting the Vassili Ostroff, or Basil's Island, on which Peter originally founded the city. The other arm of the stream, with its dependent branches, encloses several islands of various extent, which are covered with pretty suburban villas, and pleasant gardens laid out for the recreation of the public. Often have I stood upon the little bridge that spans the Fontanka, near the summer garden, to enjoy the golden sunset.

The indescribable tints that pervaded the atmosphere seemed absorbed, rather than reflected in the deep, clear and rapid current; beyond the gloomy masonry of the citadel, stood out in bright relief the noble Exchange with its classic porch, set off by two towers built with rostra, in imitation of the pillar on Pharos isle; next to it, the Academy of Sciences; a little further the elegant façade of the University, almost shouldered out of place by the vast edifice now containing the corps of cadets, but originally built by the first Mentschikoff as his residence; beyond that again rises a noble pile — the Academy of Arts, in front of which wide-terrace granite steps lead to the water's edge, having for support on the right and left two beautiful sphinxes sent from Egypt by Mehemet Ali; private mansions, all in grand proportion, succeed the Academy, and complete the line of buildings between it and the Naval College, and again, between the latter and the establishment for the Mining Corps, which two edifices are constructed on the same scale of magnitude as their neighbours, but which are beyond the ken of a spectator standing on

the Fontanka bridge. Beautiful, however, as this coup d'œil is, illuminated by the rays of a setting sun, a moonlight scene on the Neva is still more so. The calmness of the air, the glittering purity of the firmament, the brilliancy of the swift, broad stream, broken only by the deep shadows of the unwieldy-looking pontoon bridges, combine to excite in the gazer's mind a sense of deep and solemn delight. I learnt to entertain a feeling of something like fondness for that glorious looking river, and almost grieved to see it chained up for months together with ice that seemed like adamant. Yet even then the scene had charms, when, finding out some silent spot, swept clean of snow by the sharp winter wind, one could sail about on skates, watching the delicate rose tints of the early closing day that crept over the virgin snow around, or dispersed in prismatic hues as they pierced through the crystal blocks of ice, cut out and left for the night by some poor peasant, who earned a scanty meed by filling the cellars of the city householders with that universal requisite.

St. Petersburg, though now 150 years old,

has not yet been acknowledged by the mass of the Russian people, who regard it as a city of foreigners and style it, "*Niemetzkoe Gorod*," or the German town. The non-Russ portion of the inhabitants is, in fact, unusually large and various, as evidenced not only by the appearance of those whom you meet in the streets, but by the simple fact that the shopkeepers in the Nevsky and other large thoroughfares invite their customers by signboards, having inscriptions in the four languages of the five great Powers—English, French, German, and Russian. The signboards give a peculiar aspect to the Russian city, for besides their written devices, they appeal to the unlearned by elaborate displays of the art pictorial. However little the grocer may possess inside his shop, he will have a large and splendid painting, representing sugar loaves, pickle jars, dried and fresh fruits, and whatever else is grateful to the taste. The tailor announces his art generally by a huge pair of painted scissors, sometimes by a colossal copy from a print in the *Journal des Modes*, whence the milliner likewise draws the splendid decorations

of her door post. Figaro in Russia makes the public acquainted with the double nature of his craft by the representation of a gentleman having his hair cut, on one side, while on the other a lady is depicted fainting from loss of blood that spouts from her arm under the operation of the judicious lancet—the whole picture being surrounded by an ornamental border of leeches.

CHAPTER II.

Promenaders—Minister of Justice, of War—Mentschikoff—Nesselrode—Literati of St. Petersburg—Salutation—Gostinnoi Dvor—Merchants—Poor Dwellings—Emperor's Telegraph—Perevoshtchiks—Mr. Baird—Cronstadt—Gulf of Finland.

THOUGH the amount of mercantile business and the outlay of money in St. Petersburg is considerable; the traffic of passengers through the streets never seemed to me so great as I expected it to be in a city containing half a million inhabitants. This spare appearance of the population is no doubt owing to the unusual width of the streets and squares, or *plostchuds*, as they are called. An exception, however, must be made in favour of the Nevsky Perspective, at a certain hour of the day, when it is a general *rendezvous* and promenade. Between 2 and 4 o'clock on a fine winter's after-

noon, in February or March, I frequently watched the gay crowd that thronged the broad clean foot pavement. Men and women of all ranks and of all nations were there, in every variety of costume. The striking peculiarity of the concourse was the number of uniforms that glittered in it; every third man I met bore the badge either civil or military of service in the state. Ministers, generals, ambassadors, princes and princesses, counts and countesses, mingled in the stream of pedestrians, with clerks from the public offices, guardsmen and subalterns of the army, all in loud converse carried on chiefly in the French language. Russians and Germans, English and French, Persians, Armenians and Circassians, Turk and Tartar, all had their representatives in the promiscuous throng. Let us pause for a moment to observe some of the personages. That very tall thin man, closely buttoned up, with a dry caustic expression of countenance shaded by a rather sbabby hat, is the Minister of Justice, whose occasional eloquence in the Council of State is reputed to be more effective than it is acceptable at head-quarters. The tall broad-

shouldered old man, with a small black wig on his singularly shaped head and over his Chinese looking eyes, is the President of the Council. He was long Minister of War, and figured in the campaigns against Napoleon, taking great glory to himself for the easy capture of Hesse Cassel. The Minister of the Marine, the too famous Mentschikoff, is not often seen in the crowd of his fellow nobles. He has the lofty bearing of a prince, with a sarcastic expression spread over his handsome features, indicative of the pungent wit with which he castigates his duller compeers and gratifies his imperial master. Much was expected of him when he went to Constantinople, but after the miserable failure of his mission, the cry arose in every company that he was only fit for the amusement of *salons*, statesmanship being quite out of his reach. That to say this was ungrateful, if not unjust, cannot be doubted—for his mistake lay in adhering only too faithfully to his instructions.

The first time that I saw Prince Mentschikoff was in the performance of an act of courteous kindness to the memory of a most esti-

mable man, whom I had the happiness to know, the late Major Whistler, an American, and Chief Engineer of the Petersburg and Moscow railway. He came to attend the funeral of this gentleman, and I witnessed a little incident, scarcely worthy of mention but for the notoriety which the personages concerned have lately acquired. His Highness* was seated in the vestry of the British chapel, among the friends who had assembled to pay the last honours to the deceased, when, with the pompous bluster that so often characterises naturalized foreigners who hold official situations, there entered General D'Estrem, now said to be commanding the engineers at Sevastopol. Exposing his breast, covered with orders, and shewing his heavy epaulettes, the latter began to patronise the company, consisting mostly of civilians, in a loud and unbecoming tone of voice, when suddenly he observed the smiling gentleman in a military cloak quietly sitting in the shadow of the wall. The change that came

* Mentschikoff is one of three or four Russian nobles who enjoy the dignity of *Svetlost*, which the French translate by *Altesse*, in English, Highness.

over him was almost ludicrous. Before the Emperor's Minister and favourite, pomposity became servility, the loud bass tone became a moderate tenor, and with many low bows the decorated General of Engineers inquired after his Highness the Prince's health. I give this anecdote merely as an illustration of manners, without pretending to judge of the general merits of the two officers named.*

* The following anecdote, current in St. Petersburg at the time of the mission to Constantinople, will convey an idea of the wit, or rather jocularly, in which Prince Mentschikoff was supposed to indulge. It must be premised that the Emperor after exhausting all the titles, decorations, and personal favours within his gift upon his old servant the President of the Council, had recently made his son, a youth of fourteen, a lieutenant in the Guards; and the boy was seen strutting through the streets of the capital in full uniform, when many older sons of the nobility were still in the coarse coat of the youngster, or non-commissioned officer; when the rumour got abroad that Mentschikoff was setting out on an extraordinary embassy to the Porte, some one asked him what he was going for. "I am going," replied he, "to demand the Sultan's daughter in marriage for young T— (the premature lieutenant), and to aid me in this matrimonial negotiation, young N— is to be my Secretary of Lega-

Whilst speaking of the ministers, I may add that the only time I, to my knowledge, saw Count Nesselrode was on a Good Friday, in the Ambassador's pew at the British chapel, where his Excellency came about once in two years, as the law requires every servant of the Empire, to participate in the sacramental rite in that period, and having been born on board an English ship, he professed to belong to the Anglican Church.

But to return to the fashionable crowd in the Nevsky. Some, if not all, the members of the diplomatic corps may be seen there. Naples and Wirtemberg are walking arm in arm together; Austria changes his companion very often; France keeps in his carriage generally; the United States of America are rather dandified, and walk with a mincing gait; Great Britain's representative has the simple, undorned aspect and demeanour of a country squire.

The celebrities of Russian literature likewise

tion." Now Count N—, the son of a celebrated diplomatist, had just been the victim of a great scandal, his wife having run away with a Frenchman.

walk abroad their little hour. The stout hard-faced man, carrying a thick, knotty cudgel, is the editor of the *Northern Bee*; he is caricatured in statuette under the form of a bear. That smart, military-looking man, wearing a moustache, is the editor of the *Contemporary*, a bulky monthly. Another editor is that mild, gentlemanly-looking man, with his head thrown back, and face looking upward, and who keeps his hands always behind him. Yonder, the tall, overgrown Count, in loose hanging garments, is the lively author of the *Tarantass*. Many writers, however, the most original and profound, are forbidden these courtly precincts, being condemned to the dulness of a provincial town, or obliged for security to live as exiles in Paris, London, or Brussels. But see, there is a movement among the *promeneurs*, civilians raise their hats, and the military, from the generals to the sub-lieutenants, turning towards the kerb-stone, stand "attention," stiff as their own swords, with their eyes fixed upon a single-horsed sledge, that threads its way rapidly through the countless carriages in the middle of the Perspective. Sitting therein behind the

driver, is an officer in General's uniform, of commanding aspect, and stern, immovable countenance. It is Nicholas, the Autocrat of all the Russias, unescorted and unattended, save by that "divinity which doth hedge a King."

Let us now pick our way across the street to that long colonnade of shops, kept by native dealers, for the reader must know that most of the grand establishments in the Nevsky belong to foreigners.

An instructive and amusing study of human nature and national manners may be made among the Russian dealers and shopkeepers who tenant the *Gostinnoi Dvor*, or general bazaar, an institution that is to be found in every Russian town. In Petersburg there are several, the largest and handsomest abutting on the Nevsky Perspective—the oldest and dirtiest, yet most characteristic, lying on the Sadovia, or Garden street.

Here, among other things, you may remark the simpleness, not to say silliness, of the uninstructed Russian mind, when not excited by the national disease—cupidity. The shop-

men and touters, who stand in front of the cold little stalls and shops, take part in games and practical jokes of a kind that one used to think very nonsensical, even in the school playground. But assume the air of a customer, and approach one of those overgrown boys; his whole being at once undergoes in a moment a marvellous metamorphosis, the spirit of gain brightens his eyes and informs his countenance with keen intelligence; with voluble eloquence he urges the purchase of his goods, and bargains with a diplomatic skill of the highest order. In affairs of barter and sale, the Russian dealer seems "to the manner born." He delights in the art of chaffering for its own sake, and is disappointed if his customer falls too easy a victim to the price first demanded. He regrets in such a case the imaginary sum he might have gained by asking a higher price. The dark little chapels in these bazaars, with their old images in gaudy frames, to which every Russian does homage when he opens his shop and when he closes it—the similar images over the shop door, to which he seems to confide his stores when he padlocks them up for the

night—the simple cord that is passed along the exterior of the arcade of the vast quadrangle, with the watch-dogs attached here and there, and the one sole patrol, who, in the intervals of sleep, beats his heavy stick upon the pavement as a warning to all depredators—these form a series of pictures, highly illustrative of one phase of Russian life (the mercantile), which, however, it would require a volume duly to elaborate.

As the *Tchurkin Dvor* in the *Sadovia* is the bazaar or market of the poor, so the streets in its neighbourhood and around the *Sennaya*, or Haymarket, may be called the “back slums” of St. Petersburg. Here, on the damp borders of a canal, are seen irregular piles of houses, whose tawny coloured walls, besmeared and streaked with the rain from the roof, each surround close and dirty courtyards, from various points of which spring three or four staircases, dark and foul, that lead to the squalid dwelling places of the poor. In streets, again, remote from the busy centre of the town, houses built of wood predominate, and from their greater cheapness are often chosen as the abode

of poverty. In a single apartment of one of these wretched tenements, I once saw as many as eighteen persons, who had contrived to hire each a corner for shelter against the inclemency of a Russian winter. The better class of artisans and mechanics monopolize the *Gorokhovy*, or Pea Street, which, together with another long street, called the *Voznessensky*, starts from the same centre as the Nevsky Perspective—the three streets spreading out like the rays of a fan, and forming, in fact, three radii of a circle, having for its centre the Admiralty and its vast *plostschad*. I am inclined to think that the elevated balcony, near the roof of the Winter Palace, which surrounds the Emperor's Telegraph, commands a view along all these streets, but cannot speak with certainty; the balcony on the Admiralty tower manifestly enjoys this advantage of position, and suggests an analogy with the Model Prison at Pentonville and its many corridors, overlooked by the warder standing in the centre.

The magnificence of the Tzar's Court, the splendour of his palaces, the grandeur of his military displays, have been so often dilated

upon, that I deem it prudent to abstain from a recital of my visit to the Winter Palace, and to those of Peterhof and Tzarsko-Celo, as subjects with which my readers are already sufficiently familiar. For the same reason I resist the temptation of describing the costly contents of the New Hermitage, the curiosities of the Museum, the mineral treasures displayed at the Mining School, and the books and scrolls of the Imperial Library. The splendours in marble and malachite and the brilliant labours of many artists in Isaac's Cathedral, the silver and gold in the Kazan Cathedral, and the war-like trophies which overhang the unadorned tombs of the Tzars in the church of Peter and Paul within the walls of the citadel, have likewise been described by many English travellers. Before quitting St. Petersburg for the interior of Russia, however, I would entreat the indulgence of the reader while I narrate one of the many excursions which I made to Cronstadt.

The exceedingly handsome stone bridge which stretches across the Neva from the English quay to the Vassili Ostroff, since its recent completion affords a safe passage across

the river at all times of the year, even when the *debacles*, or floating down of the Ladoga ice, requires the temporary removal of the three pontoon bridges. The various steamers that ply to Pëterhof and Cronstadt are stationed below this bridge; those used by the Imperial Family, the Court and the Government officials being on the south of the river, alongside of the English quay and nearest to the city; those devoted to the service of the ordinary public on the northern or Vassili Ostroff side. On my way to the *Preestan* or landing place of the Cronstadt steamer, avoiding the bridge, I was tempted to jump into a ferry boat in which I saw two or three passengers waiting to be ferried across, but soon discovered that I should have to wait till our living freight was increased to the number of six, the sum of whose fares at one copeck each was the amount to which the boatman was entitled for every transit he might make. I had either to make up the required sum or take another boat for my especial service, when the legal charge would be three copecks. I introduce these trifling details as illustrative of the system of organisation which descends

to the meanest thing in Russia, and is perhaps one of the few advantages resulting from a despotic government. The Neva ferries are farmed out for a good round sum, 10,000 roubles a-year having been paid, even since the erection of the stone bridge. The *Perevoshtiks*, or boatmen, are fine athletic fellows, who receive a certain amount for the ferrying season, and are provided with board and lodging, such as it is, by their employer. I heard from one of them that as many as forty slept in the same apartment, which helped me to understand why they frequently made their bed in their open boats. What with their pay, the gratuities they receive from passengers, and other means not quite so honest, they do contrive to scrape together a little money before winter sets in, spite of their lynx-eyed and exacting supervisor, who is stationed in a wooden box on the landing-place. To return from this digression, I secured a ticket for Cronstadt at the floating little office on the *Preestan*, and went on board Mr. Baird's steamer, the *Vesta*.

Mr. Baird is the owner of extensive iron works situated near the mouth of the Neva,

upon land that was acquired by the present proprietor's father, a Scotchman, under very favourable circumstances. As Mr. Baird is a naturalised Russian subject, and of a rank which enables him to hold serfs, we ought perhaps to moderate our surprise at the circumstance of his having undertaken contracts with the Russian Government, which in time of war no man calling himself an Englishman ought to have undertaken. To proceed, ten minutes after leaving the quay the steamer is in the broad shallow estuary, which commences the Gulf of Finland. Its low flat shores have nothing to recommend them to notice; the channel of deep water, in which she is obliged to keep, is in parts very narrow, as the masts of that Finnish barque peering out of the water too fatally tell. When large ships, built at the Admiralty, are brought down to Cronstadt, they are lifted over the sand bar at the river mouth by that huge float called a camel, which is kept high and dry on the shore. As we advance along the gulf, Strelna and the convent of St. Serge come into view, far on our left,

About ten versts farther on, may be descried

the imperial palaces and gardens of Peterhof, at a distance from which, of five or six versts, stands the country palace of Oranienbaum, generally appropriated to some junior branch of the imperial family. The shore here rises to a certain degree of elevation, and upon these heights it was, that the population of St. Petersburg assembled in crowds to gaze at the formidable squadrons of Sir Charles Napier, not without some expectation of beholding a battle. The island of Cronstadt lies exactly opposite Oranienbaum, midway between it and the Finland shore of the Gulf. The water here is so shallow, except in the channel near the large forts, that our steamer cannot get near the land, but disembarks its passengers at the extremity of a very long jetty, where taking a droschky, I am whirled into the town of Cronstadt. The aspect of the place is not inviting—the streets wide and deserted—the houses scattered—piles of cannon balls and shells—a few marines and gangs of prisoners slowly performing their rude task work, are the prominent features that first meet the stranger's view.

The liveliest part of the town is the neigh-

bourhood of the Mole, or mercantile harbour, where you seem to meet none but Englishmen; and to hear only our native language, a very delightful change to one who has been long among a strange people. English inscriptions over shop doors abound, "Groggs," and "Porter sold here," being of frequent occurrence. The English Vice-Consul is one of the most important personages in the place, and the English church one of the handsomest edifices. I was not then sufficiently interested in the character and condition of the fortifications to pay particular attention to them. The new granite forts look formidable enough, but I was told by an officer in the service, that on a trial made upon them in the presence of the Emperor by ship guns, the granite was found to be more friable and sensitive to cannon balls than was expected. I may mention another illustration of the quality of this granite, which was afforded me during an excursion into Finland, when one day striking with my foot what seemed a block of granite that lay by the roadside, to my great astonishment, portions crumbled away into gravel—the frost and snow had

made it, so to speak, perfectly rotten. And further, the action of the water on the innumerable huge masses that lie thickly along the shore of the Gulf (rendering it impossible for even a Thames wherry to reach the land) produces the most beautifully transparent red gravel in immense quantities, clearly proving the want of tenacity in this stone.

The passage to Cronstadt, being with the current, occupies about an hour and a half; the return requires two hours steaming, for as my readers doubtless are aware, there is no perceptible tide-flow in these waters. The peculiarity of the upper end of the Gulf of Finland, forming an embouchure of the Neva, is the great expanse of shallow, the long sandy shoals lying dry, and covered with sea-fowl, within a few yards of the narrow channel through which our steamer is navigated. Excepting which, it is in no part more than two fathoms deep, and though in fine weather as smooth as a mill-pond, a long-continued gale from the west would in a few hours annihilate St. Petersburg; the inundation of 1824 lasted five hours, and did incalculable damage. No

soundings are allowed to be taken but by the Admiralty, and the channel is marked out by long sticks stuck into the bed of the gulf. The batteries on the Riesbank, lying on the southern side of the navigable channel, and those on the small islands Kronshlott, originally built by Peter, are chiefly of wood, and might possibly be set on fire by Congreve rockets or hot shot.

On board the steamer I met a gentleman from Count Orloff's office, with whom I was slightly acquainted. He had been sent down to inquire into a case of collision between the gens-d'armes and some workmen, that had recently occurred. I could not but admire the mild demeanour of the individual charged with such a duty, and the tact with which he informed me of the severity that he was ordered to use towards the police officers, fearing as I did, that little leniency would be shewn, on the other hand, to the poor peasants who had dared to look authority boldly in the face. I was indeed surprised to hear of a conflict of the kind taking place in the vicinity of the capital, where the submission of the masses is generally most complete.

CHAPTER III.

Russian Railways—Post-cart—Postillions—Road between Petersburg and Moscow—Provincial Towns—The watch-box—The Church—Villages—Moscow—Its Churches—The Kremlin—Gigantic Bells—Splendour of Cathedrals—MS. Slavonic Scriptures—Silver Cauldrons—Image of St. Simeon—Religious Processions—Tombs of the Tzars—Church of St. Basil—The Granitnaya Palat—Environs of Moscow—Swedish Architect—Dr. Haaz—Russian Convicts.

THE great innovator of modern times, the steam engine, is only now beginning to exercise an influence in Russia, an influence that we may well believe will be productive of incalculable benefit in a country whose vast level offers such facilities for the construction of railways, and in which one great bar to public improvement has hitherto been the enormous distances which separate the several points of the empire, and the consequent difficulty of intercommunication. The recent completion of the railroad between St. Petersburg and

Moscow has already endowed each capital with an additional embellishment in the form of a large and handsome station. That in the northern capital is finely situated at the southern extremity of the great Nevsky Perspective. In starting thence for Moscow the traveller has to go through the same preliminaries that he would have to perform in a railway station in England, except that before he can purchase a ticket, he must shew his passport, properly stamped by the inspecting agent of police. The latter personage, who wears the epaulettes of a Colonel, has a compartment in the large hall set apart for him and his clerk. This little office was one of the first fruits of the inroad made by the locomotive upon established usage, for it has in a great measure done away with the old, troublesome, and expensive system which required a fresh passport or permission to travel for every journey that a man might take beyond the jurisdiction of the city, and again a new one for his return home. Another compartment in this capacious hall deserves notice, it is a branch post office, where letters for the interior are received up to the

last few minutes before the departure of the train. Strict punctuality is observed in the departure and arrival of the trains, but the deliberate nature of the arrangements would shock a Euston Square station porter. There is but one passenger train per diem from each terminus, leaving the two capitals at precisely the same hour, eleven o'clock A.M., and reaching their destination the following morning at nine o'clock. If a guard be imprudent enough to arrive many minutes before his time, his ears are soundly boxed or punishment more severe inflicted upon him. The delays at the intermediate stations are tediously long, and apparently calculated upon the time required for smoking a cigarette, if I may judge from the universality of that practice on every stoppage, though really by the necessity of stowing the engine tender with wood for fuel at each stoppage.

The railway carriages are built by American contractors, and have a passage down the centre by which the guard is enabled to walk from one end of the train to the other while it is in motion. The length of the line from Peters-

burg to Moscow is nearly 500 miles; it was laid down, as the Emperor is reported to have said, for "his soldiers," not for the ordinary public, so that it only touches one town throughout its whole transit.

In these few words about a Russian railway I have somewhat anticipated the course of my narrative; for when I first went to Moscow the steam locomotive and the rail were unknown in that part of the world. The high road was however excellent, and the mail coach most comfortable and rapid, performing the journey in two, three, or four days, according to the weight of the goods taken, and whether it were the heavy, the light, or the express mail. Another mode of travelling, which prevails especially on roads where the mail comes rarely, and the *diligence* of private speculators never, is that by *perekladnoy* or post cart, which is changed with the horses at every stage. The conveyance is of the most primitive kind, innocent of springs and generally lined with an armful of hay. The experienced traveller carries with him cushions, pillows, and even a feather bed, which he requires not only in his

cart but at the *Trakteer* or hotel where he may be doomed to stop, for there he will find nothing more than a suspicious looking bedstead, and probably a long oilskin-covered sofa or divan. I have seen persons accustomed to all the luxury which wealth supplies, lying on hay spread over the floor of an inn, and covered with a sheet and a blanket, and a very pleasant bed it makes, after a weary day's shaking over half formed tracks dignified with the name of roads.

The drivers and postillions of these various conveyances display all the varieties of the Russian character, tinged with the local peculiarities that mark the inhabitants of different provinces and districts. The dark-faced *Tveritchanceen*, or native of Tver, is usually sombre and cynical in character, while the *Moskovsky Yemstcheck* is lively and garrulous. The favourite team of the Russ is the *troika*, or "three-in-hand," in which three horses are harnessed abreast, after the fashion of the ancient charioteers. The rude *telega*, or cart, comes rattling out of the yard, guided by the gallant *yemstcheck* or postillion, who, in his red shirt and knowing little hat, with a peacock's

feather twisted in the hat-band, and large boots that come over his nether garments, stands on the footboard of the vehicle, with a pleasant look of audacity in his face, that seems to say, "Now I am ready for anything." It is not orthodox for Russian drivers to use a whip, though they sometimes do conceal one in reserve for a stubborn horse, under the sheepskin that serves at once for coachman's seat by day, and his covering by night. But this is for the country roads, in town he observes strict etiquette, and as soon as you (the traveller) have settled down into your bed of hay, with the reins in his left hand, he waves his right, and screaming at the top of his voice, the horses fly off in a gallop, at which he keeps them by a loud flow of expletives, caresses, and abuse, of which the English language can convey no adequate idea. *Goloobchik* (little dove), *yablotchka* (small apple), *pagann* (pagan), *masshennik* (rascal), &c. &c. are lavished on the poor quadrupeds with prodigal eloquence, and accompanied by shrill cries and whistling. Once in the open country, on the solitary road, where there is no one to admire his witching

feats of horsemanship, Jehu subsides into a comparative state of tranquillity, and having reduced his horses' speed to the regulation trot, he strives to engage the "barinn," or gentleman he is driving, in conversation, failing in which, he breaks out into one of the many popular songs of which he is a living repository. The solitudes ring again with his shrill and long-drawn notes, which are, by the way, as genuine a characteristic of the national melodies, as the low plaintive chaunt that travellers hear in the village choruses or *chorovodi*.

On the highroad between St. Petersburg and Moscow, a distance of about 500 miles, there occur but five towns, Novgorod—the once mighty Hanseatic town, now fallen into decay and neglect—Valdai, hardly more than a post-station on the mountain range of that name—Vishny Volochok, a commercial emporium of some importance in the internal communication and canal trade of Russia—Tarjok, famous for veal-cutlets and embroidered leather shoes—Tver, the provincial capital of an ancient principality. Compare this with 500 miles of any other high road in Europe, and say whether

the Tzar might not profitably employ his time at home, in developing the resources of his country; instead of unjustly grasping at additional territory, when he has more than he can adequately regulate already.

There is a singular uniformity in the appearance of Russian provisional towns, almost tempting one to suspect that they, like many of their inhabitants, had gone through the drill, and were standing on parade. The description of one, is the description of all. The streets are long, wide and ill paved, but always straight. There are no sinuosities to delude you with the bare hope of an improvement in the prospect; the blank dreariness of the place, in this respect unlike the defects in Russia generally, reveals itself at once and unmistakeably. The houses in the principal street are of stone, so called, that is, they are built of bricks, stuccoed over, and painted a nasty yellow colour; they seldom rise higher than two or three stories, while in Petersburg five storied houses are common. The black spread eagle, crowned, that stands out in relief over the door of one or two houses in the main street, points out the public

offices where the business of the district *Ooyezd*, or of the Government, *Gouvernie*, is transacted. More disreputable simulacra of the same symbol of autocratic power are to be seen over the dark, damp, and dirty dram shops, where the reeling *Moojik* contributes to the revenues of a monopolising Tzar, and to the enriching of the unconscionable brandy farmers. The prevalent yellow colour of the principal edifices is somewhat toned down by the dingy gray of old wooden houses, dotted here and there in the larger streets, and of which the smaller cross streets entirely consist. A third and most unpleasing variety of domicile in these unpicturesque towns unites the ugliest features of both the other kinds, the basement being of bad bricks, unstuccoed, and the superstructure of wood painted yellow. The footpaths are made of planks fastened down on sleepers about a foot high, in order to keep the passengers out of the snow or slough of the road. The rickety state of these footpaths is a very characteristic sign of a Russian country town. This description would be incomplete, were I to omit the inevitable *boodtka* or watchbox, a small square wooden

hut, that has once been painted with the governmental mark of white, black and red chequers. One of these cots is placed in a spot where it commands the view of two or more streets, and constitutes the residence of two *boodtoshniks*, or stationary policemen, who mount guard in turns outside the structure, with an old fashioned halberd, walking occasionally a few steps away from their post and back again, like a spider from the centre of his web. Signboards of various degrees of dinginess and brightness may be seen widely scattered over the town. Pre-eminent above them all for magnitude and for effect, is that of the *Kharchevnia* or *Restaurant*, representing a billiard table with two fashionably dressed players, evidently at a critical moment of the game. Before concluding this imperfect sketch of a provincial town, I must point to the church or churches all built upon nearly the same plan—the form of the Greek cross. The body of the edifice with its white washed walls and iron roof painted green, supports five turrets with bulb-shaped cupolas, painted green or blue with a sprinkle of golden stars. The four smaller turrets sur-

rounding the larger central one, with the symbolism that is so prominent in the Greek church, are meant to represent the four Evangelists around their Divine Master. The belfry of the church is generally a detached tower, of equal height with the church itself.

The villages on the highroad are various in aspect, according to the wealth of the proprietors, and the attention paid by them to the condition of the serfs. As I purpose to enter more fully into an account of village-life at another part of my journey, I will now only observe, that there are, at least, three kinds of villages : — *Selo*, a village, possessing a church ; *Seltzo*, the diminutive, a smaller village ; and *derevnja*, a hamlet without a church. They all consist of *izbas*, loghouses arranged gable-wise along both sides of the road, the gables fantastically decorated with carvings, and sometimes with very pretty fretwork. At the entrance of the village stands a painted board, stating the name of the proprietor, the number of houses, and the number of souls contained therein. Accommodation is generally provided near each house, in the shape of a perforated box on the

end of a long pole, for the starling or the pigeon, creatures regarded as more or less sacred by the Russian. Each house has a large yard, surrounded by a shed for cattle, all boxed in with wooden walls, and a large wooden gate. Attempts have been made by some proprietors to introduce cottages of brick among their serfs, but not often with success, so strong are the prejudices of the people in favour of their old habits, and their combustible loghouses which they imagine to be warmer. Fires consequently are very destructive, when once they break out in the country places.

The near approach to the ancient capital of Russia may be discovered in the demeanour of the *Yemstcheck*. The orthodox Russian peasant, on first hearing the sound of Moscow bells uncovers, and signing himself with the sign of the cross, utters an invocation to his patron saint.

Moshva! *Bailaya Moshva*, White Moscow!
Svaitaya Moshva, Holy Moscow! *Matuschka Moshva*, dear Mother Moscow! as the Russian, lavishing all his terms of endearment, affectionately calls the home of his proudest tra-

ditions, and fondest associations, is indeed a beautiful city. It is built like Rome upon seven hills, not very elevated, it is true, for they are commanded by superior heights all round, and viewed from thence the city seems to lie in a basin, where its mixture of cupola, turret, and tower, their gilt or painted summits resplendent above the white walls of countless edifices, combines with the masses of verdant foliage in the boulevards and gardens, public and private, to produce on the mind of a traveller the effect of Asiatic splendour, sustained by European power. The churches are almost innumerable, and some among them of so great sanctity, that pilgrimages are made to them from remote corners of the Empire.' The singular caprice of a certain class of zealots has, it is said, been exhibited here in vows, undertaken, and actually performed, to pray on each of the 365 days of the year, in a different church, dedicated to a different saint, within the walls of Moscow. What changes the railway may speedily have made in this stronghold of Muscovite conservatism, it is impossible to say, but when I first went there, in 1845, Moscow presented

as strong a contrast to St. Petersburg as can well be imagined. The bustle in the streets was less, the number of uniforms did not strike the eye so glaringly, and a greater air of freedom prevailed generally, as though the people felt the advantage of not dwelling in the atmosphere of the Court, and in the very presence of supreme authority. In 1853, when the railway had been opened a short time, there might be observed greater activity in the business streets, but few other decisive marks of change, except a tendency manifested among the old families of Moscow, so long faithful to the traditions of their fathers, to go at last to the northern capital, and witness its luxuries and splendours. In the arrangement of its streets Moscow has not been built like Petersburg on a rectangular plan, but has grown together in concentric circles, the Kremlin being the most central point. Within its venerable walls the *Kreml*, as its name is written, contains cathedral churches and imperial palaces of great antiquity and historical interest. The new palace, which the Emperor Nicholas has built there, seems misplaced amid its antique neighbours.

Situated on one of the seven eminences already named, the Kremlin looks indeed a fit throne for the Tzars. Its long crenellated walls, surmounted by numerous towers and turrets, enclose palaces, monasteries, barracks, and cathedral churches, picturesquely jumbled together in a comparatively small space. The grey green spires upon the white exterior wall, blend admirably in colour with the barbaresque decorations of the churches, whose gilt cupolas, and especially the burnished summit of the beautiful octagonal tower that rises high above them all, and is known by the name of its founder, Ivan Veliky, greatly heighten the general effect, which effect is particularly striking in the long twilights of a Russian summer, when the light of day continues apparently ineffaceable from sunset to sunrise. At the foot of Ivan's Tower, lies the broken mass of the Great Bell, as large as a tolerably sized cottage. A bell actually suspended in the belfry, though not equal to its gigantic compeer, is of very large dimensions and weight. A friend and myself, with our united strength, could hardly move the clapper, which when it does strike the

metal, causes such a vibration, that a stranger in the belfry, involuntarily clutches the nearest support to hold by, in the tremendous shaking that ensues. This bell is only rung on high festivals, on Easter eve, for instance, at midnight, when it sends forth a sweet and solemn sound that penetrates through all obstructions, and rejoices the hearts of the faithful, for many miles around.

Much rude splendour is seen in the interior of the cathedrals : silver shrines, and images richly jewelled, paintings overlaid with gold and silver gilt, crowd every part of each sacred edifice ; no spot in all the church, indeed, remains absolutely free from ornament. The interior surface of the four cupolas is covered with the representation of a colossal head, with huge dark eyes, looking down upon the worshippers, and meant to represent the Virgin, or one of the Divine Persons of the Trinity. I saw some pilgrims enter, two men and several women, coarsely attired, way-worn, and travel-soiled. Depositing their bundles at the porch, after many prostrations and frequent signings of the cross, they kissed the tomb of Patriarch Peter,

the picture of the Virgin painted by St. Luke, (?) and other silver shrines and painted images. An old monk took us into the sacristy to see the treasures, among which none were more beautiful or more costly than the *MS.* copies of the Scriptures in Slavonic. One, presented to the church by Peter the Great's mother, was richly illuminated inside, while its external cover was of extraordinary magnificence. On a chased surface of pure gold were laid emeralds, rubies, sapphires, diamonds, pearls and rich enamel; the emeralds, pure and large, bore the graven effigies of the four Evangelists. Though but one side of a folio volume, the cost was stated to have been a million roubles (nearly £50,000). Other splendid folios were there, but none so superb as this. The riches of sacerdotal robes and crowns, both ancient and modern, were also displayed, and with these the three silver cauldrons presented by the Empress Catherine, (Voltaire's great friend) used in preparing the sacred oil for the service of all the churches in the Russian dominions. A curious fact was named with reference to the image of St. Simeon that hangs over the altar of the cathedral. In

days of yore, when new year's day fell upon the 1st September, this image was carried into the public place, and in its presence all differences and unfinished transactions were adjusted and brought to a close, so that everybody might begin the new year afresh, and clear off old scores.

The first religious procession I witnessed in Moscow, took place on a rainy day. Banners of various devices and antiquity were borne at the head of the procession; then came the portly priests, or *popas*, in rich robes, but bare-headed, accompanied by *protapopes*, who wore their purple hats; these were followed by dignitaries of a higher rank, crowned with mitres; and last of all came the Metropolitan, a little delicate looking man with an expressive face, and long grey beard. The Primate was indulged with an umbrella, held by one of his chaplains; he distributed his blessing on either side, by waving his hand, which many of the bystanders seized and kissed most devoutly. Holy water was dispersed by means of a bunch of twigs steeped in the consecrated liquid, and vigorously dashed by the officiating priest into the faces of the grateful multitude. I once

went to the cathedral to see the Metropolitan officiate, and in the hope of hearing him preach, as Philarete was eminent for his learning and piety, but the church was so crowded, that I was obliged to come away disappointed, having only enjoyed the pleasure of seeing his eminence robed and unrobed in the centre of the church, by his ecclesiastical attendants. Another singular ceremony that I saw performed by the Archimandrite in the cathedral, consisted, in part, in the combing out of the dignitary's long hair, in the presence of the congregation.

Before quitting the subject of the Kremlin cathedrals, I would indicate the tombs of the Tzars which crowd their floors. They are simple blocks, covered with faded red velvet palls, upon which are propped small metallic plates inscribed with the names and dates of the departed sovereigns—the dates being twice stated, both *anno Domini* and *anno Mundi*—while on the screen alongside are painted their various portraits. Of the innumerable churches outside the Kremlin, the most remarkable is that dedicated to Basil the blessed. It is an extraordinary conglomeration of dark little

chapels surmounted by a singularly fantastic variety of oddly shaped and differently coloured cupolas, piled together in most symmetrical and justly balanced order. It is related, concerning the founder of this church, that he was so pleased with the work when finished that he put out the eyes of the architect, to prevent him from making another like it, and so to keep his own unique. Good authorities, however, assert that this ingenious illustration of a Tzar's ferocious love for the fine arts is a pure invention. The *Granitnaya Palat*, in the Kremlin, before which are ranged the monstrous ordnance taken from the Turks and other national foes, contains the Treasury, full of remarkable objects. My attention was particularly struck by the series of royal and imperial crowns, judiciously arranged to impress the beholders with a sense of the extensive sway and majesty of the existing sovereign. There is the crown of the old Tzars, a cap of sable, set in a jewelled diadem—beside it repose those of Siberia, Astracan and Georgia—while the Imperial crown itself, conspicuous above all, is literally covered with precious stones. Several thrones also are ex-

hibited each having a history of its own. But the most significant objects of the kind in the whole collection are the crown and throne of Poland, whose story is emphatically told by a grim looking iron box placed near them, containing the constitution of Poland, securely locked, with keys of conquered fortresses pressing heavily on its lid. Strange, in such company, appears, among the portraits on the wall, that of our own king, George the Third. Such are some of the treasures and relics of the Kremlin at Moscow, which in miniature gives a not unfaithful representation of the character and progress of the Russian Empire.

The environs of Moscow are very picturesque, and from their most elevated portions offer various beautiful prospects of the city itself; and it is well worth the trouble of driving to all the points of the compass, to obtain, under various aspects of sun and shade, the many different views of this unsurpassed panorama. The traveller pauses at the spot whence Napoleon obtained the first view of the devoted city, and reflects on the emotions which must have affected him as he gazed upon plain and river,

tower, turret and cupola, palace and public building, set in a frame of brilliant verdure and foliage. Kuntzova, again, is a village that for situation and variety deserves to be called the "Richmond Hill," of Moscow. Here stands a monument erected by the late King of Prussia, in commemoration of his having first seen Moscow thence, and expressed his gratitude to the city for having saved his dominions.

On one of the Sparrow hills which overlook Moscow, I remarked three grand terraces, cut out, from each of which a new prospect was obtained—it was the spot on which the Emperor Paul began the building of a temple in imitation of that of Jerusalem, which he afterwards abandoned and pulled down. A project of a similar kind was entertained by the Emperor Alexander, who, of all the plans submitted to him on the occasion, was most pleased with one designed by a Swede—a Protestant. Having sent for the architect, and conversed with him at considerable length, His Majesty accepted the plan, and said, "Go to church at once, and thank God for having inspired you with the idea." The Swede went straight to

a Russo-Greek bishop, requesting to be admitted within the pale of his church. He afterwards conducted the building operations as far as they went, but his curious mystical design was soon found to be impracticable and proved to be a failure. The Swedish architect was enriched and forgotten. This architectural anecdote leads to another, referring to the same potentate and his father. When the plans of the Kazan Cathedral in St. Petersburg were approved and signed by the Emperor Paul, he, calling for his son Alexander, requested his opinion of them—"They seem every thing that can be desired," said the Prince. "Then sign the document yourself, so that no changes ever may be made." He affixed his signature; the actual edifice, however, is on a plan very different from that approved by Paul.

One of the most striking spectacles I witnessed in Moscow was at the Ragoshka gate, where the criminals condemned to exile in Siberia bid a final adieu to their friends. Among these stood pre-eminent for many years the philanthropic Dr. Haaz, who devoted his time, his means, and influence, to the service of

the wretched prisoners. Of his devotion to the cause he had taken in hand, no stronger proof can be given, than the fact, that in order to test the weight of the manacles attached to each prisoner, he had a pair put on his own legs, and tramped the whole length of the first stage on the highway, successfully proving to the authorities, from his personal experience of the torture inflicted, that the fetters ought to be made lighter. I see him now—the good old man—in his black old fashioned costume of knee breeches, silk stockings, and shoes with silver buckles, distributing tracts and money to the culprits, whom he benevolently called “children.”

The convicts always leave the prison on Sparrow-hill at 12 o'clock on Sunday, and marching through the town, pass the first night of their melancholy pilgrimage at this station, just outside the barrier on the great eastern road. As they move along the streets clanking their chains, it is surprising to see the number of donations they receive from persons generally of the lower class—loaves of bread, biscuits, sugar, money, are hastily thrust into their

hands by men and women, who seem quite eager to help them. This general commiseration for men doomed as felons is all the more extraordinary to an Englishman, who may have heard the yells of execration with which the people in his own country greet the public appearance of a criminal. Whether the sympathy of the Russian, expressed on such occasions, arises from his more compassionate nature, from a lower standard of morality that will not be shocked at crime, or from a feeling of the uncertain and partial administration of justice under the Tzar's government, I will not venture to decide, though I incline to the last opinion. I entered the prisoners' station, a simple wooden tenement, with a sloping wooden platform, which serves for a bed, running down the centre. They were 46 in number, all dressed in coarse linen shirts and trowsers, and the ordinary peasant's boots—one half of the head was shaved, and few among them wore cap or hat. Some were more heavily ironed than others, a few not at all. On the central platform, round which they were then standing, lay piled the bags of provisions that each man

carried with him, and at one end was spread a handkerchief, as a receptacle for the contributions of visitors. Copper, silver and notes were there, and the gifts were received with a certain ceremonial that was not unimpressive. A woman, for example, came into the room, crossed herself before the image which, according to universal custom, was suspended even in this wretched tenement ; and, unfolding a piece of paper, gave some money out of it to a convict, who seemed to take the lead. As he put it on the heap, he cried out in a deep, expressive voice, "Unfortunates, thank the donor," whereupon the whole gang, bowing their heads, simultaneously cried out with one voice, "Thanks to you, honourable and benevolent mother." A young man, apparently a tradesman, came and deposited a note with the same forms, and was welcomed in the same manner. The behaviour of the man in command of the escort resembled somewhat that of a drover, he always spoke savagely to them, and though he did not strike any one before so many spectators, he raised his hand as if he had the habit of doing so, every time that a prisoner passed

near him. After a little time we were politely beckoned out of the house, and presently the gang came out, two and three abreast, some chained together. Five or six women were included among them, several quite young. The escort consisted of six mounted lancers and about twenty-five foot soldiers—all marched quickly forward, *prastchye* (farewell) was heard; and sobs here and there in the crowd around, and they were fairly off for their six months journey, in all probability never to return. Five or six small carts followed, holding stores, and two individuals who, I presume, were unable to walk. Their rate of progress, I was given to understand, would be about twenty versts (13 miles) a day.

CHAPTER IV.

The Tzaritsin Palace—Colomna—Visit to Voskrecensky—Black Bread—"New Jerusalem"—The *Slavophiles*—Moscow University—Lectures—Freedom of Discussion—The Dissenters—Monks and Nuns—The Bazaar—Tea-drinking Shops—Russian Waiters—Parting View of Moscow—City of Vladimir—Nijni Novgorod—The Noble and his Serfs—Beehives—A blind Beggar—Founding a new Church—Little Russian Carriers—Town of Arzamas—Region of "black earth"—Town of Simbirsk—Monument to Karamzin—The Volga.

AMONG the places near Moscow that I visited from motives of curiosity, were Tzaritsin, Colomna, and Voskrecensky. The first is remarkable for an abortive attempt of the famous Potemkin, to build, for his imperial mistress Catherine, a palace that in stupendous magnitude and oriental splendour should surpass all that had hitherto been erected. It had risen to its present advanced state—the vast shell roofed in and surmounted by six odd-

looking excrescences meant for ornament—when the Empress, going to see the progress of the construction, laughed at its singular appearance, which she said reminded her of a coffin. The capricious minister instantly put a stop to the works, and left the unfinished design a monument of his extravagant folly. In a country where there are no antique ruins, this enormous failure of seventy years ago, with the grass growing on its floors, and trees thrusting themselves through its unfinished windows, affords a remarkable lesson that tells of fallen pride and disappointed ambition.

Colomna was once the residence of Alexis, Peter the Great's father, and is the place where the great reformer passed his youth, drilling his companions into soldiers, and trying that little boat which first awoke in his mind the resolve to have a Russian fleet and a sea-board to the Russian empire. All that remains of the ancient palace is a low brick pillar capped with stone, upon which were laid, in the time of Alexis, public or private petitions addressed to the Tzar. The position and outline of the old residence is however preserved by a number of

acacias that have been planted on the ancient foundation, so that what once was an audience-chamber is now a verdant avenue.

In my visit to Voskressensky, which I attempted on foot in the company of a friend, I had a chance of seeing a cottage interior; for being wet through with rain, we accepted the hospitable invitation of a poor peasant woman to shelter under her roof. Our bed consisted of a sheepskin coat laid on the floor, whilst the inmates of the hut slept on the top of a large stove that nearly filled the apartment. Black bread, boiled milk covered with the burnt scum called *penka*, a great delicacy to the Russian peasant, eggs boiled hard and wild strawberries were set before us, and afforded an excellent repast. The good woman even insisted upon our carrying some eggs with us for consumption on the road. Let me here say a word in vindication of the much calumniated black bread; it is made of good rye-flour, and though when cut it looks clammy and heavy, and tastes slightly sour, it is very satisfying, easy of digestion, and after a little practice, quite palatable. The tables of the

wealthiest are furnished with it as a change from wheaten bread, and the peasant prefers it for its substantial qualities to the latter, which he considers as a delicacy—and the ladies of higher rank for the white pearly colour it gives to their teeth, owing to the grit contained in the flour of rye. The fondness for this forbidding-looking aliment I once saw strikingly exemplified in the person of a French youth returning from Russia, who on board ship could eat nothing for several days, until we shewed him a lump of black bread that had travelled with us from Petersburg; he darted upon it with an eagerness only equalled by the craving importunity with which he continued to apply every day after for a fresh supply. But to go back to Voskressensky, the chief object of our visit was the church and convent called “New Jerusalem.” This pile of buildings, which is beautifully situated on an isolated mount, does really assume to be a representation of the temple at Jerusalem, and to contain facsimiles of the most interesting relics for which pilgrims travel to the sacred city; the holy sepulchre, the manger, and the Church of Bethlehem. The whole is surrounded by a double wall, be-

fore the gate in which stand five or six canons in position. Russian convents, it may be remarked, have been ever distinguished in history for their stubborn resistance of invaders, and this one seemed ready to take its share in that distinction, should it ever be attacked. The monk, our guide, was not very anxious to shew off the building to us, probably because we were heretics. Many interesting mementos of the patriarch Nikon, the Russian Thomas-a-Becket, might have detained us in this place, but out of humour with the weather and with our unceremonious reception, we returned to Moscow in disgust.

The manner of living in Moscow is much more free and easy than the luxurious and courtly fashion which prevails in the modern capital. The military governor is not quite so awful a personage to dwell near, as the Autocrat whom he represents. The old families residing here still keep up the remembrance of boyard independence, and tacitly maintain a certain sullen opposition to the course of modern politics. One of the theoretical principles of the party of *Slavonophiles*, whose head-quarters

are at Moscow, is grounded on the historic fact that the ancient Slavonians lived in communities, which were in every essential particular republican,* and its partisans do not hesitate to assert that such a form of government, giving scope and development to the agricultural and productive powers of the nation, is the most fit and natural system for the Russians to revert to. I myself have heard an officer in the Imperial service, vigorously call in question the wisdom of Peter the Great's reforms, and assert, as he pointed to his clean shaven face, "all we beardless ones should have our heads cut off, and then Russians, in their own way, and with their old beards, would work out a civilization most suited to them." From the freedom with which opinions like this were frequently uttered, I concluded that the Government regarded them as harmless, else they would have been soon effectually checked. Indeed Pan Slavism has of late years been rather in favour with the Emperor Nicholas himself, for reasons, however, I suspect which refer rather to the Slavonic

* *Sloboda*, the name of these ancient communities is a corruption of *Svoboda*, the Russian word for *free*.

nations incorporated with Germany and Turkey, than to the emancipation of his own subjects from despotic rule. Moscow University, again, has sent forth more Russian liberals than any other educational institution in the Empire, not excepting Dorpat, from which it would have been natural to expect some display of the Teutonic aspirations after freedom. While I write, there is living as a refugee in London, a gentleman of eminent talent, educated at the university of Moscow, who has undergone in prison and exile, sufferings that no pen can describe so well as he has done himself, in a work which he has recently printed in London, entitled *Tiourma e Silka* (Prison and Exile). It was with no small degree of pride and pleasure, that I heard, when at Moscow, of a winter course of lectures delivered by a Professor in the university, on a comparison of the histories of France and England, brought down to the period of the Stuarts. A salvo of plaudits, deafening and irrepressible, accompanied the lecturer's closing words, when after alluding to the great men of France, and saying that the grandeur of Shakespeare and Bacon seemed

to efface that of all others, he thrice emphatically repeated Bacon's words, "Knowledge is power, knowledge is power, knowledge is power!" The enthusiastic reception of these charmed words, by so large and mixed an assembly, seemed an instructive indication of the incipient "march of intellect," that must sooner or later produce its effects in spite of ukases and secret police. Another unexpected instance of freedom of discussion, I witnessed in the public square of the Kremlin. It was in Easter week, and was said to be an annual custom. The *Rascolniks*, or dissenters, assembled in moderate numbers in the Kremlin, and opened a public controversy with the members of the established Russian church, upon disputed points of doctrine and ritual. No doubt the police maintained a control over the debate by means of "detectives," and the like, still the fact is worthy of note. The disputants stood in various groups, and every one took some part in the discussion. Allegory was the favourite form of rhetoric employed by the "old believers," and when taunted upon their mode of performing mass, they retorted with accusations against the

Reformed church, of having permitted, if not introduced the use of tea, tobacco, and potatoes, all, in their opinion, causes of dire disease and death. I need hardly explain that they, the dissenters, are now without a priesthood, for so staunch is their faith in the Apostolic succession, that they repudiate a clergy ordained by any bishop who was not such before the ecclesiastical reforms made by Peter the Great. They entertain great reverence for the old cathedrals, and at this Easter festival, crowded to kiss the sacred relics and images of saints, but left the churches as soon as mass began to be celebrated by men whom they regard as having no title to the priestly character. One advantage at least they possess over the orthodox, in being diligent readers of the Scriptures, which they possess in the old Slavonic version.

The convents and monasteries that are so numerous in and about Moscow, are reported to have been the scene from time to time of dreadful tragedies, but I confess that I was not on the alert for such horrors, and had no means of confirming the rumours. Monks and nuns are constantly met with, darkening with

their black robes the throng in every street, just as officers and soldiers give the predominant colour to a Petersburg crowd.

The mercantile portion of the town is like what I have already described as existing in the more northern capital, the *Gostinnoi Dvor* (Bazaar) being perhaps more antique and its covered passages more dark and intricate. I was once led thither to taste of the various kinds and qualities of Russian mead, and can honestly recommend any of my readers who may like a sweet and sparkling beverage to go and do the same. There is apple mead, and currant mead, and raspberry mead, in fact mead flavoured and coloured by all the fruits that grow in the prolific empire. Moscow is also famous for its wheaten bread made into loaves called *Saihy*. I once received a present in Petersburg of a *Saiha* brought from Moscow by an enthusiastic young lady, who wished to express the pride she felt in her country and her great regard for me by a sending a Moscow loaf three or four days old. Curious scenes, illustrative of national manners, are often to be witnessed in the *Trakteers* or tea-drinking shops.

These favourite places of resort consist generally of a suite of rooms, situated either on the basement or on the first floor of a corner house, the higher ones being reckoned the more genteel. Round various small tables, distributed over the room, are to be seen groups intently conversing as they swallow cup after cup of tea, *ad infinitum*. Their mode of drinking is rather peculiar; the tea, without cream or sugar, is sipped from the saucer which is held nicely balanced on three fingers of the left hand; the right hand holds a lump of sugar, from which the possessor nibbles a portion, and keeping it between his teeth, sucks the warm liquid through it. It is astonishing how much sugar is consumed in this way, and as an important consequence, how large a development the manufacture of sugar from beetroot is taking in various parts in Russia. The waiters in these establishments would look strange by the side of the "plump head-waiter at the Cock," or any of his London compeers. Their costume consists of a striped cotton shirt worn like a kilt over a pair of cotton pantaloons; their long thick hair is parted down the middle and kept always

smooth and very glistening*, to the manifest detriment of the napkin, which a Russian attendant invariably carries slung round his neck.

The parting view I obtained of Moscow from the Ragoshka gate, through which I passed on my journey eastward, was very beautiful. The lofty white towers of the Kremlin were magnified by a peculiar hot, dun-coloured mist, against which their burnished gilt tops shone with unusual lustre, while the more distant turrets and buildings were hid in the singular vapour, the whole vividly recalling the fancied but never forgotten scenes of the magic Arabian tales. Twenty hours' post travelling, through almost uninterrupted forests of birch and pine, brought us to the ancient city of Vladimir with the Golden Gate. It counts third, among the five capital cities which have successively acquired supremacy in the ever-varying domains of the Russian empire. Picturesquely situated on a hill, where about twenty churches come prominently into view, Vladimir overlooks a superb extent of wild wooded country watered by the sinuous stream of a noble river. The Golden Gate is not an ungraceful structure,

where it stands an isolated monument of past times; though it must be remarked that it is neither used as a Gate, nor has any other tint but that acquired from whitewash and the never-failing green paint. The only objects I have noted as being seen on our road to this place were a gang of Siberian exiles, and a troop of dancing bears with their keepers. These most fertile regions have a population no larger than the most barren district of Scotland. Again, miles and miles of interminable forest varied occasionally, as we approach the river Okka, by large and populous villages, and thirty-six hours of incessant rolling bring us to Nijni Novgorod, the seat of the far-famed fair at which Asiatics and Europeans meet to chaffer over their respective productions—tea brought in caravans from China being the most important commodity. The town is situated on a high promontory, whose base is washed on one side by the Volga, on the other by its tributary the Okka. An ancient Kremlin or citadel, with low embattled walls, stands on the highest point and falls over the slope towards the river, beyond which, on a perfectly level and appa-

rently boundless plain, lie widely-spread rows of booths, those devoted to the reception of Chinese merchandize being constructed in the form of pagodas. Strikingly prominent among the buildings is a mosque, the tall pointed spire of which, surmounted by a bright metallic crescent, seems to assert its position in the face of the temples of the cross. This mosque is, as I have been informed, the most northern Mohammedan temple that exists. Having to pass a night at Nijni we found the comfort of the bed-tick sacks that we had brought with us, which stuffed with hay we converted into excellent beds. Here too I witnessed, for the first time, the ceremonious reception of a Lord by a deputation of serfs sent to meet him with the bread and salt—*hleb e solia*.

Three sturdy peasants with flowing beards, and comfortably dressed in sheepskins, came into the garden where their master received them, and presenting a large black loaf and a small portion of salt, offered the congratulations of their village upon the arrival of the *Gospod* (or lord) among them—*Batushka Alexander Alexandrovitch*, (Alexander the son of Alexander).

Their expressions of devotedness extended to the lady and the children of the family, and *Matushka*, or *Batushka*, (old mother or old father) was the title attributed to every one, whether young or old. It was not a little curious to observe the manner of intercourse between the rude children of the soil on the one hand, and the wealthy and travelled noble, their master, on the other. Though the reverences of the former were very lowly and frequent, the tone of their conversation was free and unembarrassed, so much so that the master was obliged on occasions to "*couper leur caquet*," as he termed it, dismissing each one with a *Bog stoboi*, "God be with thee," and a gracious extension of his soft white hand for them to kiss. We afterwards came to a succession of villages, the property of A. A., and were received at the gates by crowds of peasants, bearing the bread and salt. The excitement was very great among the rustic population, they pressed round the carriages full of admiring wonder, and lifted up their children to the windows, asking innumerable questions. At one place, to my great horror, the whole mass fell upon their knees, a

posture from which their master hastily bid them rise. Wherever the water was good, a sample was brought to us, often from wells 25 fathoms deep, with ice on the shaft all the summer through. The serfs in some of the villages, being engaged in trade, were rich men, and lived in large comfortable wooden houses. One old fellow, who invited us to a refectiou of tea, cakes, oranges, and sweetmeats, had been overlooker or steward of several villages, and for his good conduct had received a caftan of honour decorated with gold lace. His garden and his house were both well furnished. Among the cucumbers, potatoes, and apple-trees, stood at least five-and-twenty stumps of trees, a puzzle to me, until I discovered that they were hollowed out for beehives, and well-stored with wild honey. Amid all the joy and satisfaction apparently caused by our arrival, there were, however, occasional indications of the misery that was kept in the back-ground by prudent stewards and overlookers. One wretched looking man, watching his opportunity, threw himself at the feet of his "barinn," and piteously implored

justice. He was briefly referred to the proper authorities at the *Kontora*, or steward's office, and bid to depart. But for the most part all was flattering and joyous. Some expressions, characteristic of the occasion and the people, I have preserved. A blind beggar from a neighbouring estate was observed by the lady-mistress, who said to the female peasants around, "He comes from the stranger village to this, I suppose, because he gets so much from you." "Ah," replied they, "perhaps we are now alive upon the earth, because of the little we have given him." So positive and real was their appreciation of the Scriptural text that refers to the "cup of cold water." On being asked whether he thought that our host had been pleased with his coat of honour, one peasant answered, "Yes, I am sure he was very glad to have it; but he merited it, he quite deserved it, for he has served you well." As a crowd of women persevered in accompanying her to a considerable distance from their own village, the lady inquired, "if they were about to conduct her all the way;" they returned, "Oh, to the end of the world, if you wish; we will carry you in our arms, you

and your children too." "No," replied she, "as you are old women, my children will be ready rather to carry you." These glimpses of the exaggerated expressions of feeling, that on great occasions proceed from the Russian serf, will help the reader to perceive the grounds which I had for fancying, as I often did, that a resemblance existed between the unadulterated Muscovite rustic, and the ardent native of Ireland.

The proprietor's visit was made the occasion of laying the foundation-stone of a new church in the principal village on the estate. It was Sunday, and mass having been performed in the old tumble-down wooden church, a procession, consisting of the priest, deacon, choristers and school, with banners, painted images, cross and chalice, moved forward to the ground, marked out for the new erection, accompanied by a crowd of bearded men, and kerchiefed female villagers. Another long mass was performed under the canopy of heaven, at the conclusion of which the *Gospod*, and the various members of his family, each placed a brick in the cavity prepared, arranging them in the

form of a cross ; coins were deposited as usual, holy water was sprinkled on every brick, and upon the sacred ground ; while much crossing and sprinkling of the worshippers commenced and concluded the scene. For each scion of the master's house special prayers were offered, as for the members of a reigning family. A festival succeeded ; in the absence of cannon a musket was frequently fired, a tar-barrel and other illuminations blazed—the national soup with black-bread and doses of corn-brandy were consumed at tables, improvised on the green-sward. But all was solemn and quiet, no merriment—not a single cheer was heard from one of the assembled company. This silence was not so much in deference to the day of rest as it was in accordance with the grave character of the people ; Russians very rarely commit the impropriety of an enthusiastic outbreak of feeling—the soldiers, whose “hurrahs” our brave fellows at Sevastopol hear so frequently, are actually drilled into the habit—I have heard them myself repeatedly practising this part of their duty in the barrack-yards. One circumstance struck me forcibly on this occasion, as

illustrating the violence of sectarian prejudice among these people: numbers of peasants of the old faith stood eyeing the provisions which their orthodox fellow-serfs were eating with great relish, and refused to sit down or partake the food with them. This, under the very eye of a master possessing almost absolute power over them, proved at least the strength of their religious convictions.

Resuming our route, after four days' repose, we journeyed on for three days and nights through the Government of Nijni Novgorod to that of Simbirsk. The undulating and fertile plains are frequently marked with prosperous looking villages—here cradled in a hollow—there perched upon a modest hill. On the road we passed a bivouac of *Malorossisky*, or Little Russian carriers, their teams of oxen standing browsing around the heavy carts from which they had just been unharnessed. The men were tall and bony, with less hair on their small heads than the Great Russian wears; they are said to be very hot tempered and more independent than their fellow subjects in other provinces. I myself confess to a liking for

them, having met in Russian society with the most frank and cordial treatment from gentlemen born in Little Russia. We met also *Kibithas*, or tilted carts, full of Tartars, moving towards Nijni for the great fair. Arzamas, an old episcopal town, at which we changed horses, besides a great number of churches, possesses a convent that was once in great repute; it also figured prominently in the formidable rebellion of the Cossack Pougatchoff, who personated the Emperor Peter III., Catherine's husband and victim.

Passing on, we entered the fertile region of the "*tchormoy zeum*," or "black earth," which extends in a broad belt diagonally across the Russian empire, from the Volga near Simbirsk to the Dnieper below Kieff, and admired the extraordinary fertility of the land, although from the rich dark soil we got covered with dust as black as coal. A large and populous village, belonging to the Potemkin family, is worthy of note for the bustling activity which prevailed in its markets, where I was struck by seeing loads of grain exposed for sale in the open carts. The town of Simbirsk itself is

prettily situated on the banks of the Volga, which here rise considerably above the level of the normal flatness of Russian scenery. Over and above the ordinary structures which are common to all provincial capitals, Simbirsk boasts of a monument erected in honour of Karamzin, the historian of Russia, who was born here. It consists of a block of polished granite, inlaid on two sides with bronze reliefs, commemorating the presentation by the Emperor of a pension to the historian's widow; a niche in front contains a bronze bust of Karamzin, and on the top of the block stands a large figure of the genius of History, also in bronze. The police from time to time have had to interfere with the ignorant peasants, who, on first seeing this statue, imagined it to be that of a saint, and crossed and prostrated themselves before it.

I proceeded about 150 versts beyond Simbirsk, where my journey came to an end in the month of July, and the following eight months I passed on those distant shores of the Volga.

CHAPTER V.

Picturesque and fertile promontory of Simbirsk on the Volga—The *Sveteolka*—The *Molodetzky Kourgan*—Bargemen—Fish of the Volga—Model farm—Russian Peasants — their huts — Images — Conflagrations — Arrangement between lord and serf—Manumission—The *obrok*—The Passport system—Boris Petrovitch's estate—Forest trees—Value of timber—Wild honey —Runaway serfs—Fisheries on the Volga—Organization of the Villages—Military Conscription—The Schoolmaster among the serfs—Finnish children—The Princess and her peasants.

THE extensive estate on which I made this prolonged sojourn is situated on the rocky promontory enclosed in the remarkable flexure or elbow which the Volga makes as it flows from Stavropol to Syzran. This elevated shore on the right of the great river, overlooking a vast low level on its left, has convinced geologists of the former existence in these regions of an immense sea, of which the river Volga, the sea of



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Aral and the Caspian are but the remnants. The country is unusually picturesque and fertile. Wood and rock, river and plain, corn and meadow land lie spread out before the spectator who ascends to the summit of any of the many neighbouring heights, upon one of which a fantastic little tower, called the *Sveteolka*, has been built by the proprietor to indicate the spot whence the Tartar invaders of Russia gained their first glimpse of the fair lands which they coveted. In a country whose natural features generally present a monotonous aspect, perfectly wearying to the traveller, there is a peculiar satisfaction derived from the view of a bold and picturesque variety, such as that offered by the hills and valleys of Oussolia, Jigoulee, and the river Ousa, where it falls into the Volga. The atmospheric glories, if I may be allowed the expression, spread over and beautify every corner of the earth. The effects of cloud and sunshine excite our admiration in the deserts of Africa, on the snowy plains of Lapland, or upon the interminable steppes of Russia, and such effects furnish nearly all the pleasure which a traveller in Russia can extract from

external nature. The wide expanse of earth, the pure sky, the bright sun, the moon and stars are the few great natural objects with which the inhabitant of these regions is brought into spiritual or poetical communion. We see in consequence that space in its widest acceptation is the popular aspiration of the Russians, the vagueness of which is however corrected by a clear tangible positivism of mind that requires everything to be placed in a strong light. The national passion for territorial acquisition is an impressive illustration of this truly Russian characteristic. For my own part, fatigued with the unvarying horizon so constantly presented to view during my Russian travels, I experienced intense pleasure at finding myself in the picturesque promontory of the government of Simbirsk. Its highest point, *Molodetzky Kourgan*, a majestic rock clothed with shrubs and wild flowers, that has been honoured by a visit from Peter the Great, commands a magnificent view of the monarch of European rivers and its extensive shores. On the west the eye takes in forests and cultivated fields, picturesque eminences and popu-

lous villages with their grey wooden houses faintly discernible in the distance; on its eastern shore boundless steppes, whose verdure is maintained by the dews of heaven, but which conceal no water-spring for the refreshment of man. The camp-fires descried far off may belong to a troop of Cossacks in bivouac, or to a band of herdsmen or haymakers, who, when employed on the steppes, have to carry supplies of water from their houses, or trust to the juices of the plentiful water-melon which grows here almost spontaneously. Floating on the surface of the river may be seen huge corn-laden barques towed against the sluggish stream by gangs of *Boorlaks*, or bargemen, the cadence of whose chorussed songs is finely modulated by the vast solitude around; or they may be toiling painfully along with one of those immense rafts of massive timber, on their way to distant lands, destined not unfrequently to supply the wants of the navy of England. As accessories to this scene stands the eagle on the rock, or a flock of wild swans flies high above, or the pelican fills his sack from the rich stores

that swim beneath the wave. The fish of the Volga indeed are renowned; the beluga for its great size, the sterlet for its delicate flavour, and the sturgeon for its roe, which makes the favourite Russian comestible called caviare; and I remember well an expedition, of which I formed part, to an island some miles down the river, where that morning's spoils of the fishermen were cooked for us over a fire made on the sand, and we made a sumptuous repast of sturgeon and sterlet soup.

As it was in this remote corner of the empire that I saw much of the unsophisticated Russian peasant, his way of life at home, and in his relation with those above him, I shall endeavour in the following remarks to set forth the result of my observations, and exhibiting the *Moojik* (peasant) as he is, proceed in ascending steps from him, as the broad social foundation, to illustrations of the various grades that constitute the edifice of Russian society, the apex of which, figuratively speaking, is the Tzar himself. In doing this, I shall in some measure preserve the continuity of my narrative in the

hope of expressing as vividly as possible the reality of the incidents that came within my experience.

The property of the gentleman, whom I shall call Boris Petrovitch, which includes several villages and many thousand serfs, was maintained by the enterprising spirit of its owner, and the intelligent activity of his chief steward, in most admirable order. Quite a model farm had been created by the latter gentleman, who had studied agriculture in Scotland and elsewhere.

It was not without surprise that I saw handsome brick stables, faced with stone, a cowhouse with a certain degree of foppery displayed in its arrangements, the names of its forty inmates, for example, painted above their neat stalls—and the elegant dairy being about to receive fresh embellishment from a series of bovine pictures. There was something, doubtless, incongruous in the proximity of these and other appliances of modern rural economy to the wretched-looking huts and rude implements of the Russian serf, who pertina-

ciously sets his face against innovation and improvement.

As an instance of this opposition to novelty it may be mentioned, that after the erection of the neat stone parsonage of the principal village, several cottages were built of the same material, but no one would willingly inhabit them, because they were colder than the log-huts ; so the people said, but a stronger objection to them was, I believe, that they regarded them as godless dwellings, opposed to the institutions and traditions of their ancestors, and admitting too rude a glare upon the dim, lamp-lighted images of saints, which are suspended in every *izba*. It would, however, be for the interests of morality, if these grimy old homesteads could be made to give way, with a few other staunch prejudices, to the spirit of modern improvement ; for whatever patriarchal simplicity there may be in three or four generations occupying the same small cottage, it must be admitted that the custom cannot promote either health or decency. But the *izbas*, or wooden huts, still

remain, as I have said, the favourite dwellings of the Russian *Moojiks*.

They are built of pine logs, transversely laid and morticed together; the roof of planks is sometimes covered with loose straw, held together by pronged branches of trees; the door almost invariably has a porch, with a bench inside for rustic delectation on summer evenings; the interior of the dwelling is usually divided into two apartments, with one small window in each, and an enormous brick or tile stove built into the partition which separates the rooms. Conspicuous in one corner is the *obraz*, or saintly image, framed and glazed, if the owner be rich enough, and having a little lamp suspended in front of it, that burns night and day, as long at least as oil can be found to feed it, and this image is the first object saluted by every person who crosses the threshold. The temperature of these dark dwellings is generally at 70° or 80° both winter and summer, though the wealthy peasant often has two houses, each suited to the different season, and some proprietors have even erected in their

villages two churches, one for summer and the other for winter. The *izba* is lighted at night by a pine stick thrust torch-like into a crevice of the wall. As the interstices between the logs, of which the hut is built, are filled up or caulked with hemp and other combustible materials, this mode of lighting, it may easily be imagined, is dangerous, and not unfrequently results in fire. To meet this too common calamity, every Russian serf is bound to answer the tocsin, and bring with him such implement as is prescribed to him for the extinction of the flames. That no mistake may arise in this matter, the board which bears the peasant's name in front of the *izba*, is also embellished with the representation of a pail, an axe, a mop, or a ladder, as the case may be, which article is required of its owner at every conflagration. I witnessed several of these fiery visitations, which exhibited in striking contrast the apathy of the families whose property was burning, and the dashing activity of other peasants directed by their lord to stop the progress of destruction. With folded arms, the sufferers.

looked on, uttering few lamentations and occasionally invoking the aid of the saints, while their neighbours rushed in among the falling rafters, reckless of the danger to which they exposed themselves, to save such household treasures as they could lay hold of. On one occasion of this kind, an affecting incident took place; the master of the cottage happened to be absent when the fire broke out, and as he drew near the ruins of his home, his assembled neighbours burst into tears, thus showing the depth of their sympathy with his misfortune. That human passions, however, as well as human sympathies find room to play among these uncultivated people, was proved by an act of incendiarism that destroyed a whole village: a woman jealous of her husband's intimacy with his neighbour's wife, rushed into the hut of her rival, and set it on fire. The poor maddened creature, after having perpetrated the act of revenge, fled across the Volga, but was captured by the steward of the estate soon after, and sent to Siberia. The destruction of this village was the more lamentable, as many improvements

in the style and comforts of the dwellings had been introduced into it by the steward, from England and Sweden. Devastation of this kind, either from fire, famine, or inundation, often leads to the permanent transfer of the whole population to new ground, where new tenements are erected by the sufferers, the master furnishing the timber. On this estate there was a village styled *Seetia* or "satisfied," whose inhabitants had come from another estate of the same proprietor, where they had been starved out in a year of scarcity. Many of these forced removals, however, of a rural community from one locality to another, originate in a motive that displays in a very strong light the cruelty and narrow policy of the system of serfage, while it reveals the germ of an agrarian revolution, destined perhaps to rival the most violent convulsions of this nature yet recorded in history. A word or two of explanation of the bond which unites lord and serf, will render this statement more intelligible. The owner of the soil, in return for the labour which is to make that soil productive, gives to

each of his serfs a portion of land, which the latter cultivates for his own use and advantage, being furnished besides, from his lord's forests, with materials for the construction of a dwelling-house. The week is divided into two *troikas*, or sections of three days, one of which is devoted to the master's service, the other is the peasant's own. When this arrangement is equitably carried out, the condition of the *moojik*, when happily situated with regard to soil, is by no means unfavourable, especially as he religiously avails himself of the saints' days and holidays (formerly so numerous, but now reduced by a recent Ukase, to fifteen in the year) which fall within the landlord's *troika*. Now, it has been for some years past a growing difficulty with landowners and their stewards, to find means to eradicate from the serf's mind, the conviction that the house and land occupied for a number of years by himself and his forefathers, is *bonâ fide* his own, and to meet this difficulty, the *Pameshtchiks* (Proprietors) resort to the cruel expedient of making "a deserted village," by transporting its inhabitants to

another part of the estate. Sometimes too; these changes arise from the mere superfluity of land and scarcity of population. The fertility of the soil in one spot, being worked out, that locality is left to lie fallow for years, and the peasantry are transferred bodily to a new, unexhausted region. That was certainly a great and wise step of the Emperor Alexander, which emancipated the serfs belonging to the appanages of the Crown, for though the habit of dependence on a master may have made it seem hard to them at first to pay their own taxes in a direct manner, to battle with the official authorities, and to incur other responsibilities of comparative independence, yet I have ascertained by incidental conversations with the men themselves, that the Crown peasants are happier, and more generally prosperous than the bondsmen of the boyars. Still, it is a fact, that the notion of emancipation is unwelcome to many peasants. In the summer of 1853, when on a visit at a country house near Moscow, I was amused with the lamentations of a young man, whose father had been manumitted by a

former owner of the estate. When I told him that he ought to rejoice at being a free man, "Look," said he, "at Feodor, the head of all the servants in the house, master of the pantry and the wine cellar, what a good place he has, and he is a serf, while I can get nothing to do with all my freedom, and am now only in the house as a supernumerary." I could not reply to this practical argument anything that would have been convincing to the Russian mind. As I have before stated, there are serfs living in situations favourable to trade, who have become millionaires, and some of the richest shopkeepers in St. Petersburg belong to Count Sheremetieff, who receives only about £1. a year each from them, as *obrok*, or tribute, yet will neither give nor sell them their freedom. He is proud to own these wealthy peasants, and they perhaps not unwilling to enjoy his protection and favourable countenance.

Serfs of this description do give sometimes large sums of money for the purchase of their freedom. The gentleman whose property I have been describing, told me that one of his "people"

had bought his liberty with 33,000 roubles (£1500), the sum offered being fixed by the man himself. I did not learn what the good man's occupation was, but it must evidently have been something very lucrative, to permit of so high an appreciation of himself. The productive value of an agricultural peasant depends in some measure upon the seasons, and the nature of the soil, whether they be propitious or not. At the period of my residence in the agricultural district that I have introduced to the reader, the season was not considered to have been very favourable, yet the products of the principal estate, which numbered 4000 men in its eight or ten villages, gave a net return of 110 roubles, or 5 pounds sterling per man. By bearing in mind the fact that these labourers support themselves and families by tilling their own allotments of land during the legal *troika*, or three days set apart for them, the reader may form some conception both of the wealth that may be extracted from these fertile regions, and of the vast importance of an unimpeded, unblockaded commerce to the Russian noble.

The *obrok* paid to their owners by traders and artisans is a commutation of the labour *troika*, which the master claims from every serf; and except in a few cases, like that already mentioned, the amount of it rises with the gains of the peasant. When a peasant boy displays an aptitude for some calling that can be pursued profitably in a town, he is sent to undergo a rough apprenticeship with a master of the art, and afterwards to work his way up in the world. If he should fail his owner is burdened with him again in his native village; if he succeed he will have to make a hard bargain with his master, who holds him fast by means of a passport renewable every year, or in some cases every six months. At each renewal the *obrok* must be paid; for by withholding the pass, the landlord confines the serf to his own village, since not only the police authorities of a town are bound to see that every resident has documentary authority for living in that part of the world, but every employer is responsible for his workmen and servants, and must see that their passports are of the right date and in order.

Thus if it pleased some future Count Sheremetieff to refuse a passport to one of his rich peasants in Petersburg, that individual would be forced to leave his well furnished house and luxurious habits of living, to return to his native *izba* and the toils of field labour. I cannot say that I ever heard of an instance of such a reverse, but the law certainly allows it. The serfs of the poor gentry, naturally suffer most by the *obrok* system. We once had a young nurse-girl in our employ, receiving the modest pay of two roubles (six shillings) a month. On the very day when it was due I was favoured with a visit from her mistress, a lady of shabby genteel appearance, who spoke French, and requested me to pay *Masha's* wages to her. "But, madam," said I, "the girl will want to buy clothes with the money she has earned." "Dear me, sir, she will ruin herself and me too, if she be left to buy her own clothes; I can buy such things much more advantageously, and therefore I beg you will always pay me the money she earns." And regularly every month the worthy dame either

came round herself, or sent a collector in the shape of an old woman servant, until we had too much reason to believe that *Masha* helped herself from our wardrobes, when we sent her back to her benevolent mistress.

To return to my village life. The extensive farming operations carried on upon the estate of Boris Petrovitch furnished ample employment for all the population both summer and winter. Great as was the number of his serfs, they were barely equal to the labour of gathering in the produce of his rich and countless acres. Every hour of the short summer season appeared to be incalculably precious. The hay was stacked upon the fields where it had grown, not to be carried away till frost and snow had put a stop to all labours of tillage; the corn was stacked in like manner to be threshed in winter—wheat, rye, millet and buckwheat were thus laid up, a month or two later, in the *anbarri* or wooden warehouses on the river bank, ready for exportation. In the *goomno* or barnyard of one village, I counted 26 stacks of corn: On their own fields the peasants were driven to

the necessity of threshing out their seed corn on the nearest hard spot of ground, winnowing it in the ancient manner by throwing it into the air and letting the chaff fly before the wind. One day a party of us came upon some villagers thus engaged and singing at their work, when I was much struck by the remark of a Russian lady present, "You may tell by their singing that they are at work upon their own fields." This suggestive observation was forcibly illustrated shortly afterwards by the view of a troop of women and girls engaged on a meadow of their lord's, under the superintendence of a *prikastchik* or overseer, who carried a long tough twig in his hand, a sufficient preventive, no doubt, to singing and hilarity in general.

Besides the labours which the fields require, the forests also give occupation to numbers of the rural population. They are of great extent, some being ten miles long for instance, and kept in excellent order, being well aired by regular alleys cut in all directions. Their value in this part of the world is much enhanced by their proximity to that great artery

of communication, the Volga. Moreover, since the Baltic provinces have been denuded by the demands of commerce, and especially by the consumption as fuel of their best timber, large trees for masts and like purposes can hardly be found nearer the sea-coast than in this locality. I well remember the surprise I felt at the apparition of a fellow-countryman in that remote region, who had come from Riga to clear some enormous pines that had been purchased for the British navy. The authorities at the Admiralty would also, no doubt, have been surprised to learn that those majestic children of the forest had originally been sold by the under-steward for twenty-two copper roubles a piece, or about one pound sterling. I must add that the owner himself was heartily vexed at the sale having taken place, and loudly expressed his dissatisfaction while driving me through the forest, where I saw eighteen stout oxen laboriously tugging forward a single tree.

While upon the subject of forests, I would mention a circumstance communicated to me by the steward of a Prince Galitzin, who, I was in-

formed, possessed in the Government of Kursk, an oak forest of 6000 *desyateens*, i.e. 16,200 English acres in extent, which is nearly valueless to its owner, simply from the want of easy communication, and the difficulty of transport to the populous districts, or to the ports of the empire. A birch and pine forest belonging to the same nobleman, but situated in the neighbourhood of Moscow, produces him an annual revenue of 20,000 silver roubles (£3200), without compromising its existence as a forest. In Russia, as elsewhere, "there is a pleasure in the pathless woods," and many a ride and ramble through tangled copse and woody dell can I recall, that displayed to my delighted eyes innumerable sylvan beauties. The wild hop, with its graceful tendrils hanging like ringlets, is very abundant near the Volga; so are the wood strawberry, the cranberry and bilberry, and the varieties of wild flowers are countless, the pale violet, wood anemone and harebell predominating. Unavoidably trampling upon these dear familiar objects, I was once agreeably startled by finding myself in a rustic apiary, thus hid-

in the recesses of the forest. The hives consisting of hollow trunks of trees, and covered with a loose lid, similar to those already described as at the village near Nijni, were ranged round a clearing of moderate area, and in this wild spot might not unreasonably have been taken at first sight for the ruined pillars of a wooden Druidical temple. Any dream of this kind, however, was soon dissipated by the voice of a watchman, who started out of a hut made of boughs, and informed me that so much honey had been recently taken by thieves, that the villagers had undertaken to do his work and placed him there on guard. Depredations just at that time had been frequent, and extended to horses and cattle, as well as honey; for a band of runaway serfs, headed by one Kozakoff, a military deserter, infested the hills and caused so much excitement in the neighbourhood, as upon one occasion to interrupt a water trip that we were taking down the Volga. The fellows, however, could not have been very desperate bandits, for I heard, to my no small amusement, that the steward's head clerk, an

old man who enjoyed some popularity in the villages, had held a parley with the enemy, and genteelly requested them to abstain from alarming the good lady, Helena Ivanovna. Nothing occurred to call out the excited loyalty of the lady's followers. The police-major of the district was subsequently sent for, and of course did nothing, until the men set at work by the energetic steward had captured some of the delinquents, when the official gentleman, whom the humourist of our party had nicknamed *Arbooze*, or water-melou, from his size and shape, met the valiant band and played Young Norval, by begging a peasant to give him one prisoner to bring into the village in triumph.

In addition to the labours of forest and field, there were the fisheries of the river, that gave employment to many of the peasants on this estate. In a country where the church requires the observance of frequent fasts or abstinences from flesh-meat, fish becomes a very important article of commerce, and piscatorial delicacies like the sterlet, can be had nowhere but from the Volga. I was informed that the

twenty versts of the river, to which the owner of Jigoulee had a right, were worth 10,000 copper roubles (nearly £500) per annum, though the situation was somewhat distant from any large towns. For winter supply the fishermen stored their finny spoil in ponds formed on the meadows by the spring inundations. It was curious to see them in the coldest time of the year draw the creatures alive from beneath ice a foot or two thick. A large hole being made in the centre of the ice to receive the net, and smaller perforations all round, through which to pass the ropes, fish of all kinds and sizes were drawn to the surface, and a selection made of such as were wanted. Like wildfowl and game, fish is kept sweet in winter, long after death, by being frozen, and it is thus carried to markets, at a great distance, by the cheap conveyance of sledges. I may here add, that in Petersburg I have often bought a pair of frozen *Rabtchik*, a kind of heath-cock,* for fifteen copecks, or sixpence English, and a brace of plump partridges frozen, for one shilling.

* Capercailzie.

Caviare, made from the roe of the sturgeon, is also exported from the Volga, and is, as I have before hinted, rather a costly commodity, and highly relished by the Russians.

A word or two in this place on the ruling organization of villages may prove interesting. On the part of the master there are generally four grades of overlookers—1st, the superintendent of the whole estate; 2nd, the local steward of a district, who has charge of two or three villages; 3rd, the *Starosta*, or elder of each village; and 4th, the *Prikastchik*, or gangster as we should say of a party of labourers. Besides the *Starosta*, however, who is responsible to the master for the conduct of the village, there are elders chosen by the people, and charged with the protection of their interests before the master and the steward. These usually form the deputations to the master, bear petitions, and speak in the name of the whole village in matters of complaint, congratulation, or of mutual arrangement between master and people. It is found convenient, for instance, to distribute the labour due to the master in

such a manner, that half the serfs work for him on one *troika*, half on the other, so that a particular piece of work is not brought to a stand still in the middle of the week. To an arrangement of this kind, the consent of the elders is necessary.

Again, when the dreaded conscription or military levy comes, the elders are consulted by the master as to what men can best be spared out of the village. They possess, in fact, a sort of magisterial power, and can inflict punishment to a limited extent for immoral conduct, and preserve in many respects the faint traces of a popular system of self-government that may possibly, in the course of time and progress of events, be restored to a more vigorous action than it ever possessed.

The power of the steward is, in practice, absolute, and almost without appeal; though by law he can do no more with a disobedient serf than lock him up, and inflict upon his body forty stripes save one. He can, however, punish in a manner more justly hateful than this, by sending an offender to be a soldier. I never saw

less military ardour in any people than is openly manifested by the Russian peasantry, nor could I be surprised at this reluctance to serve, for independently of their naturally unwarlike character, the prospect set before them is not very encouraging. If a man survive the harsh treatment and cruel privations of twenty-five years' service, he has been alienated from his family and friends, and returns to his village little better than a stranger, with all the vices of a military life indelibly fixed in his character, and being no longer a serf, he has no claim upon the benevolence or protection of his former master. In a future chapter I propose to enter more fully into the career of the Russian soldier, and his chances of promotion to the highest ranks. At present, as an illustration of peasant character, I will only mention, with reference to this subject, an instance of noble contention in self-sacrifice that occurred in one of the Oussolsky villages. At one levy of seven men in a thousand, all the eligible rogues and vagabonds of the estate being exhausted, the lot fell upon a family, consisting of a father and three

sons, all married. As the old man stood weeping before the steward, the younger men strove with one another as to which should devote himself for the safety of the others.

“ You have more children than I have,” said the youngest, “ and can be ill-spared, let me go into the army.” “ No,” replied the eldest, “ you are my father’s favourite, and to lose you would break his heart ; I shall go myself.”

“ You are both wanted at home more than I am,” said the middle brother, “ therefore, I shall be the recruit this time.”

The steward, who narrated this little incident, assured me that, accustomed though he was to painful scenes, the touching earnestness of this heroic abnegation almost unmanned him. Not only are the military levies, which the Emperor of late has caused to be made so frequently, heavy burdens on the peasantry, thus torn from their homes and the support of their families, but they tax the revenues of the landowners to a very serious extent. Referring to the data mentioned in a previous page, it will be seen that the levy of 7 per 1000 of able-

bodied agricultural labourers, making 28 on the whole estate containing 4000, is nearly equivalent to the confiscation by the state of £140 a year.

The consideration of facts like this will show how extremely important to Russia and her prosperous development is peace, and especially those practical fruits of peace, mechanical contrivances calculated to abridge manual labour. Machinery had been introduced partly into the estates I visited, and in one village 30 men were doing the work that always before had required 120 men to do it. As an instance of the extensive nature of the agricultural operations performed by these untutored serfs, I may state that 28,000 sheaves of corn were thrashed, winnowed, and stored in granaries in one day. This was upon one estate, numbering 8 villages; on another, 15,000 sheaves were disposed of in the same way, 6000 having been done in one *goomno*, or barn-yard, by the help of machinery. Yet even here where its advantages are so manifest, diminishing the general labour and increasing the general wealth,

machinery is regarded with a suspicious eye by the peasantry, who would, if left to themselves, rather go on in the way their fathers went before them, without improvements, novelties, or manufactures, save those they have ever practised. I used to see the women combing out their bit of flax near the cottage door, spinning with the distaff and spindle, and making their strong linen cloths by hand-looms.

It was amusing to hear how stoutly too these village worthies had resisted the school-master abroad. This dreaded individual, the harbinger of revolutions, made his avatar on these villages in the form of a high-minded and handsome lady, the mistress of the vast estate, who sought relief from the pomp of cities, and the life of courts, in visiting the home of her poor and ignorant serfs. She resolved to carry out the injunctions of an imperial ukase that appeared about 1830, and to establish schools among them, undertaking herself to be the first teacher, and to form a normal class. No one would come to the *Gospodsky dome*, or Hall, for such a purpose, so she fixed on a certain

hut, for the first lesson. Two or three girls assembled; but the old folks could not find a seat for the *barinna* (mistress), and the door was left open, so that some how or other, the pigs grunted their way in, as innocently as possible. On another occasion, and at another house, geese were admitted during the lesson, and cackled loud enough to drown all instruction, to the great delight of the malcontents, who manifested their opposition in every way, short of rebellion.

The lady, however, persevered, and I had the pleasure of seeing the fruit of her labour in numerous schools scattered over the property, and under the direction of the young women who had been her first scholars. The instruction afforded by these was, as may be supposed, very moderate both in amount and quality,—girls were taught reading, the church catechism, knitting, and spinning, in the old fashioned way; the boys, reading, writing, and arithmetic; in the absence of copy books, the inexpensive expedient of a little sand sprinkled over the desk was adopted.

At Christmas, the children were indulged with *a tree*, and various presents of ribbons, stuffs for dresses, lumps of sugar, &c. were distributed among them by the lady. It was a festival which, no doubt, rendered that winter memorable in the village annals; for ten years have now elapsed, during which the *Gospodsky familia*—the master's family—have not visited those shores of the Volga, save in small sections, and for very brief periods.

The superintendence of the schools devolved on the priest, who in return permitted the children to reap his corn for him in summer; a season in which time, as I have already said, was far too precious in those agricultural districts for any native—man, woman, or child, to think of schooling or in-door labour of any kind. At one of our examinations, his reverence showed no little pride in exhibiting three children of the Tchuvash race, a fallen branch of the Finn tribe. The Tchuvashes and Mordveens had, not long before my arrival, been baptized in a crowd on the river bank by a bishop, acting under orders from head-quarters;

they nevertheless, it was said, continued to practise pagan rites in the secret recesses of a wood near their village. The children were neatly dressed in coarse linen frocks, embroidered on the breast, back, and shoulders with a pattern that strongly reminded me of the New Zealander's tattoo. These devices are Runic in character, and the symbolical meaning of some of them is still understood by the people. Beads and shells of different colours formed their necklaces, and fringed their gaudy sashes. Though they had been three years under tuition, the wild scared look of their restless eyes bespoke minds in a still savage state. The eldest girl repeated the prayers asked of her, and performed all the crossings and bowings required by the Greek ritual in a flurried manner, her agitation being so great that the examination was abruptly brought to a close lest she should fall down in hysterics. Altogether the scene was very painful, for the Russians, both old and young, shrunk from the poor creatures with contemptuous smiles, as from outcasts and savages, a feeling in which the mistress, even while she kissed the

trembling children, seemed involuntarily to participate.

Kind acts, like those just mentioned, greatly endeared the Princess to her peasants, who, having once broken through the barriers of reserve, communicated with her in a certain tone of intimacy, that curiously revealed both their simplicity and their shrewdness, and displayed whatever patriarchal spirit may be said to exist in serfdom. The following instances will convey an idea of the intercourse that sometimes subsists between mistress and serf:—

An aged peasant of venerable appearance had been invited to sit for his portrait to an artist of our company, and took extreme interest in the progress and completion of the drawing. A short time afterwards, the old man was introduced into the boudoir of his lady mistress, which was hung round with family portraits of personages of high rank and station in the Imperial service, when the following dialogue ensued: “Well, Sarokin, how do you like my apartment, here, you see, are my brothers?”

“Ah, Matuschka Helena Ivanovna, it is a beautiful room, and the pictures are splendid. That is Alexander Ivanovitch, he is serving, I think, in the Caucasus.” “Yes, he was badly wounded in the last engagement, and this is Vladimir Ivanovitch, now with the Naslednik (the heir apparent).” “And what a handsome man Anatole Ivanovitch must have grown; why, all the family is here; but where is my portrait! I don't see my portrait hanging up, and the painter finished it some days ago.” “Oh,” returned the lady, unable to repress a smile, “it shall be hung up, Sarokin, as soon as the frame has been made and fitted to it.” She kept her word, well pleased by so simple an act to gratify the ancient serf and make herself popular among her people. On another occasion, a peasant woman standing in the same tastefully arranged cabinet, broke out into the exclamation: “Why it is quite a paradise, and you deserve such a dwelling, you will go to the paradise above too, you are so good.” In the same strain of rustic admiration, a

rough looking fellow, his face beaming with smiles, kept walking round and round the lady to her great perplexity ; when she asked what he wanted, he replied, " Nothing more than to look at you, Matuschka Helena Ivanovna."

CHAPTER VI.

The Russian Priest—The Monk—Hereditary Priesthood—The Priest's Daughter—Value of livings—Character of Parish Priests—The Kieff Vicar—Superstitions of the Russian Church—Images and Pictures—Rationalism of the higher classes—Religious Toleration—Distribution of the Scriptures—Anecdote of Peter the Great—Orthodox and Dissenters—Fanaticism of the *Rascolniks*—Almsgiving.

FROM the peasant I pass on to the priest, a transition not so violent as it would appear in England, for in tastes and habits the country clergy in general are very slightly raised above the serfs, among whom they minister. "He is but a *moojik*," is an expression I have often heard applied by Russians to their priest, whom they generally rank with the *starosta*, or understeward. The reverend personage, however, with whom I became acquainted on the estate



F. Hartmann

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of Boris Petrovitch, was an honourable exception to this rule, both in his own individual qualities, and in the treatment he received from the lord of the land. He was tall and robust in person, with a jovial countenance, and possessed of that essential qualification to the priestly character in Russia, a full and sonorous voice. His great efficiency as a pastor was not derived from his moderate intellectual acquirements, so much as from his active participation in every scheme of improvement that was set on foot by the proprietors of these scattered villages. As I have already stated the schools were committed to his charge and supervision. A short religious tale that he wrote and had printed for distribution among such as could read, and of which he gave me a copy, I still preserve as a "Volga tract." He was a married man, as the law required, for in curious contrast to the discipline of Rome, the Greek Church makes it a condition of holding a benefice, that the priest shall have a wife alive; and as he can only be the "husband of one wife," the lady is I presume well taken care of, and

every human effort made to prolong her existence. Should a priest become a widower, he enters the ranks of the monastic clergy, from whom alone the hierarchy is supplied.

It is a strange transformation from the lusty priest, with his flowing hair and beard, in his loose green robe and broad brimmed hat, to the pale monk who has taken leave for ever of all meats stronger than fish, and who is robed in black with a brimless hat and a crape veil hanging therefrom over his shoulders, the very picture of asceticism, voluntary and involuntary.

In disposing of his family the priest usually sends his sons to the seminary set apart for ecclesiastical students, whence they are turned out prepared to follow their father's vocation ; so that the clerical profession may be said to be hereditary, and to partake of the nature of a caste, as well as that of an order. Sometimes, however, the youths enter upon a secular career, either in a military or civil capacity. I knew a man, the owner of some of the largest dwelling houses in St. Petersburg, who had at-

tained to considerable wealth by the shrewd and unscrupulous use of opportunities at his command in the civil service, and who boasted to me that as a boy, the son of a priest, he had ploughed his father's field, wearing the *laptee*—plaited bark shoes used only by the poor peasantry—"and now," added he, "I am worth 50,000 roubles a year." But the priestly office does, generally speaking, descend from father to son in a long line of succession. The clerical blood, if I may be allowed the expression, is moreover kept pure, by the necessity entailed upon members of the order of choosing their wives from among the daughters of the clergy.

This custom is carried out in a way that curiously illustrates the practical mode of dealing with questions of ecclesiastical economy that prevails in Russia, of which I will give an instance that occurred within my own knowledge. I was staying at a village near Moscow, when the cholera was raging violently. The priest, a simple but worthy man, after burying one of his children in the day, was called up in

the middle of a tempestuous night to administer the sacrament to a dying person at some distance. Grief of mind and personal exposure brought on a fatal attack of the disease, which carried him off by noon next day. The living was vacant, but the priest's widow and a numerous family, remained to be provided for, and the following method, usual in such cases, was adopted for the accomplishment of that end. A petition was immediately addressed to the Metropolitan at Moscow, stating the circumstances which had deprived the village of its spiritual guide, and praying his Grace to send an officiating priest *ad interim*; the petition alleged further that among the bereaved family there remained a daughter of the deceased of marriageable age. The temporary nominee to the sacred office promptly arrived, in the shape of a quondam military chaplain, a sort of Russian Friar Tuck, who illustrated the abundant flow of his conversation by a copious use of vituperative expletives that certainly smacked more of the camp than of the church. A few days later I saw the priest's daughter,

a good looking young woman of five-and-twenty, setting out for Moscow in a telega and pair, furnished by the steward. Arrived there, she was in due course favoured by the Metropolitan with an interview, in which, after a few questions, he informed her of his intention to provide for her and her father's surviving family, by appointing to the vacant benefice some single man who should marry her. An hour was then fixed for her to come and make her choice, and certain aspirants in the seminary were offered the chance of a wife and a living. At the appointed time four or five of these young men were ushered one after the other into the lady's presence, and engaged her in conversation, each being eager to ascertain the lady's attractions, and display his own. The successful candidate, having the young woman's choice ratified by the Archbishop, was ordained and married, and soon found himself in possession of a wife, a living, and a house, well stocked and tenanted by the wife's mother and little brothers and sisters.

The value of these country livings, however,

is very small, and consists chiefly in the house and glebe allotted by the owner of the property, and in a small stipend derived from the same source. My memoranda on this point are not precise, but I think I am not in error in asserting, that the priest's annual stipend on an estate yielding £5000 a-year, was about £13. These feeble resources are augmented, sometimes considerably, by fees paid for the performance of Church rites and sacraments, and by offerings made at the numerous festivals which occur in the course of a year. At Easter, for instance, when the priest and his staff of deacons and choristers go round to every house, repeating a form of prayer in each apartment, and sprinkling it with holy water, a collection is made for their benefit. Besides the Church festivals, there occur in regular succession during the year, the ceremonies of blessing the waters, blessing the cattle, blessing the apples and the corn, and none of these little opportunities of increasing a scanty income are neglected by the clergy. The conveyance of a sacred image to the houses of the sick and dying is

also rewarded by small contributions. By such means and by the produce of his glebe, the village pastor contrives to support his family in a position just above that of the peasant.

In personal demeanour, the parish priests are frank and hearty enough, given to hospitality themselves, and accepting it from others readily. Doubtless there are occasions, on great holidays, when some among them so far yield to human frailty, as to be overcome with strong drink, it being offered to them at every house they visit. But the Russian sense of official dignity and the necessity of keeping up appearances is so great, that I do not believe many priests could be found in the country who would allow themselves often to be thus overtaken. My friend Father Simeon certainly would have denied the imputation indignantly. A trifling circumstance will serve to illustrate one feature of sacerdotal dignity, as displayed in the outward manifestations of conventional respect. I was given to understand that I had been guilty of a solecism in manners by unceremoniously shaking hands with a priest. What

other mode of salutation remained open to me, a foreigner and a Protestant, I could not discover; but the mode adopted by the faithful is to place the back of one hand in the palm of the other, and thus present a receptacle for the unction that flows from the priest's fingers, which make the sign of the cross in the direction of the layman's open hand. Many Russians, particularly among the lower orders, kiss the priest's hand when they meet him. Yet with all this outward show there is surprisingly little real respect entertained for the clergy as individuals. Boris Petrovitch invited Father Simeon to his sumptuous table very frequently on principle, because he thought it right to give an example of respect to the office he held, but this was a rare instance of politeness shewn by an aristocrat to a priest. The general neglect into which the clergy have fallen would seem to be sanctioned, if not promoted by the Government, which has no desire to see the reign of the Patriarchs restored, or even to be reminded of their former power.

The following anecdote proves the existence

of this kind of feeling. There was at Kieff a vicar, who gained general admiration by his superior learning and piety. A new governor of the town was so deeply struck with the reverend personage's high qualities, that in writing to head-quarters his account of men and things, he said: "Here is a vicar whose monastic condition one must regret, for he has talents that fit him to be a minister of state." This unlucky recommendation was productive of an order, which arrived with the speed of unpleasant news, for the removal of the unconscious ecclesiastic to Viatka, a fortress on the confines of Siberia, where he remained in exile for two or three years. In the same spirit of keeping down the Church, and asserting the supremacy of the State, has the Government chosen for the most influential post in the Synod, a military man, the rattle of whose sword is said to silence any unacceptable debate that may arise among the bishops, archbishops and primate.

It is not my purpose to enter into detail respecting the superstitious observances of the Russian Church, for, to give the first impressions

which they produced upon my mind, would be unfair to the Russians; and to enter into the symbolism upon which they are founded, would be departing from the subject to which this book is confined. The extensive use of images is the most observable of these errors. Every Russian bears a small cross, or an image, and very often both, suspended on his breast next the skin; every room is furnished with an image, large or small; they are to be found in shops, school-rooms, barracks, and near water-springs; to the sick and sorrowful, such as are endued with special sanctity, are brought from churches and convents. I remember during the cholera in 1853, that a heavy image, covered with silver, was brought from the church of one village to that of another at some distance, and afterwards paraded with mournful chants from house to house. If that did not drive away the plague, I was told resort would be had to a charm belonging, I imagine, to a præ-Christian superstition. It consisted in the assembling together of the single women of the village at midnight, when, with torches in their hand,

with hair dishevelled, and robes loosely flowing, they danced round in a circle, uttering a wild and meaningless form of exorcism. Whatever object came within their view, while performing this witches' dance, they would pursue and kill, were it man or beast, persuaded that it was a form assumed by the evil spirit which brought the calamity upon them.

While the reverence of the uncultivated Russian mind, is almost exclusively fixed upon images of ancient and grotesque design, taken from the barbarous models of the primitive Greek Church; the religionists of a more intellectual order, employ the art of painting, ostensibly as an aid to devotion, and ornament their places of worship with finished works by modern masters. A striking instance of the extent to which this search after scenic effect is sometimes carried, occurred one Easter in the private chapel of a nobleman, at St. Petersburg. A painting of Christ in the sepulchre, had been exposed to view there, during the whole of Passion week, until Easter eve, when at midnight, as a crowd of worshippers were en-

gaged in the imposing Easter service, and the multitude were lighting their tapers, exchanging the usual kiss, and exclaiming *Christos voskress*, "Christ is risen," suddenly the old picture disappeared, and an elaborately finished painting of the Resurrection, supplied its place. It is worthy of remark, that the manufacture of the rude, old fashioned images, forms the staple of the old town of Soozdal, which supplies nearly all Russia with them.*

To return to the church. Genuine religious feeling, if I may venture an opinion upon so serious a subject, seemed almost confined to the lower orders. Among the educated classes, the doctrines of Voltaire, Hegel, and the modern rationalists, were continually met with, and openly maintained by both men and women of various degrees of intelligence. The late Emperor Nicholas, towards the end of his reign, strove to give a religious tone to the society in

* This is by no means the sole instance of a town, or village, devoting itself to one particular occupation. There are one or two Russian villages, where the speciality of the inhabitants is the training of dancing bears.

his capital, and partially succeeded. Religion became fashionable, but freethinking was not overcome, and *les esprits forts*, were still to be found in the neighbourhood of the throne. What can be worse than the following flagrant instance of contempt for their national religion? A young officer, speaking of the compulsory sacrament, of which every servant of the crown must partake, at least once in two years, told me that he and his comrades, in order to avoid the disagreeable necessity of confessing to a priest, gave their chaplain two or three roubles a piece, to induce him to sign the document, which testified to their having performed the solemn religious duty thus required of them by law. Though the young men may possibly have fancied themselves actuated by a sentiment of honour, in refusing to perjure themselves, what can be thought of the military Balaam, who accepted their bribes.

The religious toleration of the Russians as exhibited, for example, in the numerous churches in St. Petersburg, consecrated to nearly all the existing confessions of Christendom, may be

explained by the foregoing remarks, as springing from the lay, rather than the clerical element of the national church. Much of this may be traced to the philosophic indifference of the Empress Catherine, and to the more christian liberality of the Emperor Alexander I. My readers may, perhaps, be surprised to learn that there exists at this moment, in St. Petersburg, a depôt of our Religious Tract Society, where their tracts, translated into Russian, are openly displayed for sale ; and further, that these Protestant tracts are not only extensively distributed among the populace, but that, shortly before my quitting the country, they were, by Imperial permission, dispersed among many thousands of the Russian soldiery.

With regard to the recently mooted point of the distribution of the Holy Scriptures printed in the Russian vulgar tongue, by our Bible Society, I may state that the first edition introduced into the empire, was bought up by the Synod, and retailed by that body to any person who applied for a copy ; but when the edition

was exhausted, the clergy had influence enough to prevent the introduction of a reprint.*

To counteract the effect of this prohibition, a Life of Christ, embodying the main portion of the Gospels, was translated into Russian, obtained the sanction of the censor, and was printed. According to custom, it was presented again at the censorial department as a printed book, and, quite contrary to the usual practice, was refused the second approval; thereby causing a loss of £200 to the undertakers of the work. A new censor had come into office, and the influence of the clergy preponderated. A translation of the Old Testament into the vulgar tongue was also made by a learned Russian ecclesiastic, and lithographed, so as to evade the censorship to which a *printed* book was subject; but being, notwithstanding, made known to the authorities, it was immediately ordered to be burnt; the reverend philologist himself only escaped harsh treatment through having been a preceptor of the heir apparent,

* The ancient Slavonic Scriptures are still disseminated among the dissenters in MS.

the present Emperor, and by living in comparative obscurity. The best motive which I ever heard assigned for this persecution of the Scriptures in an intelligible form, was in the spontaneous expression made by a well educated Russian youth, on his hearing some passages read from the English version,—“How childish it seems when in a familiar language.” The formal sound of the dead Slavonic had, by association, absorbed a portion of the real respect he felt for the word of God, and imposed upon his understanding accordingly. Much of the internal stability, and external preponderance of Russian power has been obtained, by skilfully acting upon a principle of this kind in politics as well as in religion, and Russia has often obtained great political results by an imposing display of force, which, if tried, would not have borne the test of action.

Before quitting this subject of the Scriptures, I would mention a curious fact respecting Peter the Great and his undeveloped views with regard to the Bible. When in Holland, he caused to be printed a large folio edition of the Scriptures

in Dutch, so arranged that one half of each page was left a blank column for the reception of the Slavonic text, which he ordered to be added to the work when he returned to his own country. To a few copies this was done, but whether purposely or ignorantly, the various sacred books in Slavonic were erroneously applied to the Dutch text, and the whole work became a complete jumble. The project was abandoned, and the principal stock of the book destroyed. Copies of it are now only found in the libraries of book-collectors, in two of which I have seen the work. What was Peter's design in having it done, is as hard to divine, as it is to calculate the results that might have been produced by so mighty an instrument introduced into Russia 150 years ago.

The intolerance of the so-called orthodox Russian Church is further seen in her treatment of the *Rascolniks*, or dissenters, in the penalties of confiscation and expatriation awarded to new seceders, and in the law which requires the offspring of mixed marriages to be brought up in the Russo-Greek faith. In this way, the

Protestant father of a family with a Russian wife, or *vice versa*, is compelled to see his children educated as members of the established Russian Church. Dissenters from this established Church are very numerous, and present many shades of difference in doctrine and practice. The *Stari vairtzy* (or old believers) and the *Stari obratzi* (worshippers of old images) are the most respectable in numbers, station and conduct. One source of bitter controversy springs from the mode of making the sign of the cross; the orthodox unite the forefinger and the major with the thumb in performing this operation; the sectarians insist that the junction of the annular and the little finger with the thumb is the only true way of discharging this sacred duty. What recondite principle of the doctrine of the Trinity is concealed in this apparently trivial dispute, I need not stop to inquire. The *Rascolniks*, refusing to attend divine service in the regular churches, assemble secretly to worship in retired places, very frequently in the apiaries, which make no unbecoming temple. As their schism arose from a

religious horror of change, it is not quite unaccountable that they should entertain a strong antipathy to shaven chins, tobacco, potatoes, and Germans, under which name they include all foreigners. There still exists a convent belonging to them on the steppes, about 300 versts (200 miles) from the Volga village where I was staying. The church also is standing, and various relics of wealth and grandeur remain, but reparation even by a single brick is strictly forbidden, as is the slightest attempt to build another. The nunnery was burnt to the ground, and the inmates, with martyr-like constancy of purpose, excavated dwellings in the earth, where they now live. They were commanded to cease ringing the church bells, and even to pull them down; but the execution of this harsh sentence they left to the officers of the police. The reputation of this persecuted sect was, however, not unsullied, and certain communistic notions and practices were attributed to them, which their isolation from their fellow-countrymen might possibly encourage.

Though the Russian peasant, generally speaking, has, according to his light, a practical, common sense way of viewing religious questions, fits of fanaticism do occasionally break out in particular communities. The entire population of a village, belonging, I believe, to Count Nesselrode, was once exterminated by mutual acts of martyrdom. Instances, too, have been named to me, of crucifixion, maiming and mutilation, pulling out the right eye, and cutting off the right hand, by fanatics who had misread portions of Holy Writ. An example of another kind of fanaticism was given by the parents of certain children that had been vaccinated; they scratched the vaccine matter out of the pustules, saying in excuse that it was sinful so to interfere with God's will. From the frequent deprecation of sin by the Russians, one might be led to suppose them the most pious people on the face of the earth. One will say it is a sin to tell a lie, while uttering the most unblushing falsehoods; another will profess horror at the crime of theft, while man-

œuvring to cheat you. But there is one Christian duty which few Russians indeed are ever found to neglect, and that is the giving of alms. However small the coin, something is given to every beggar, and I have seen men coming out of churches with a handful of the quarter copecks (less than half a farthing), which they distributed among the crowd of mendicants lying in wait at the church door. The very expression, *Ne prognaiwetess* (Don't be angry) addressed to an applicant whom you do not relieve, shows the universal feeling with regard to giving to the poor. One numerous class of beggars seen in the towns and on the high roads are the mendicant monks and nuns, soliciting funds for the repair of a convent or the erection of a church. Having obtained authority from the police, not, I imagine, without paying for it, they wander about with a book in their hands, covered with a cross-embroidered cloth, on which lie a few copper coins to act as decoys, and beg from every passer-by. What sums are collected in this

way I never heard, but the patient endurance of these devotees, and the immense distances they are known to travel, used to invest them in my eyes with the romantic charm of middle-age pilgrims.

CHAPTER VII.

The *Pameshtchik* or Landed Proprietor—Dishonesty among the Stewards—The Lord's dinner party—Rural Amusements—Russian Libraries—Imperial Authors—Habits of resident Landlords—Marriage of their Šerfs.—“The Dead Souls”—Education of the young Nobility—Anecdote of the Emperor Nicholas—Horse-racing—Masquerade Anecdote—Treatment of Political delinquents—The Captive of Orenbourg—Despotism of the late Tzar—Punishment of Count P.—Tax on Passports—The Chemist and the Crystal Palace.

THOUGH land is held by nobility of all grades, from *Yevo Blagorodio*, “His Honour,” and *Yevo Vesokoblagorodio*, “His High Honour,” up to *Yevo Siyatelstvo*, “His Lustre,” and *Yevo Svetloct*, “His Serenity,” yet the name of *Pameshtchik*, is generally applied to the class of small proprietors residing on their estates, “Honours,” and “Excellencies,” rather than to the Counts and Princes, whose immense possessions supply Europe with grain and other

products. The latter, as magnates of the Empire, live in the blaze of court splendour, or in the excitement of foreign travel, and rarely visit their country mansions and estates, save to confer with the steward, or make some indispensable regulation among the peasantry. Like the sovereign whom they serve, they are exposed to the dishonesty and chicanery of their servants and stewards, whom they now and then attempt to detect, by suddenly appearing in the village, receiving deputations of peasants, hearing their complaints, and asking them questions. This mode of proceeding does not always bring out the truth, for the steward very often makes the serfs accomplices in his roguery, by granting them unlawful privileges at the expense of his master. I saw a flagrant instance of this on an estate of which the staple product being timber, the steward gave no further account of the hay and corn produced, than to say it was consumed by the people and horses of "the house," whereas he sold these commodities for his own benefit, realising three or four thousand roubles a year. The peasants

meanwhile, living in substantial brick cottages, built by the owner of the property, having, besides corn land and grass land for their own use, paid an *obrok* of thirty roubles (£1. 8s) per annum, and carried on an extensive business in basket-making, by which several of them had become rich. In this instance, the absenteeism of the lord, seemed to inflict injury on no one but himself. A few of the great nobles, however, with their families, do pass a certain season of the year at their "village," busying themselves with the management of the estate, and partaking in all the pleasures that the country affords. Birthdays in the family, and saints days in the village, are commemorated with unusual festivity, under the presiding genius of the lord, who is too happy to vary the monotony of country life, not to be generous of expense, on occasions of this kind. Friends and neighbours, when only separated by one or two hundred versts, pay mutual visits, and sumptuous dinners are given, consisting of every delicacy within reach, always including a bottle or two of champagne, genuine or

counterfeit. Distinctions of rank are laid aside at these banquets, with the greatest good nature, though sometimes the company assembled is promiscuous enough. I will attempt to describe one of these dinner parties. Previous to the great repast, and by way of introduction to the serious business of eating, a little bye-play goes on in the drawing room, where a tray, containing caviare, oysters, cheese, salt fish, or other piquant viands, is served round to the guests, together with strong liquors to wash the dainty morsels down. The move into the dining room, is not always made in prim English fashion; the ladies, however, taking the lead, if the gentlemen do not offer their arms. At table, the sexes are usually ranged face to face, ladies on one side and gentlemen on the other.

Let the reader imagine himself at one of these entertainments, seated at a long table, well covered, and garnished with flowers, and with the fruit destined for dessert, among which the melon and water-melon stand conspicuous. No dishes are on the table, for the meats are

all served round, but tall bottles of French and Rhenish wines, are distinguished like sign-posts down each side of the hospitable board. The lady of the mansion presides: her tall and stately figure, fair complexion, golden hair, and large liquid blue eyes, combine curiously with high cheek-bones, and hard expression of countenance, to proclaim that mixed Teutonic and Slavonic descent, which characterizes many of the Russian nobility of the present day. Her lord, seated opposite to her, is a gentleman of frank and pleasant aspect, tall and straight in person, somewhat stiff in manner, but, though mindful of his dignity, he is evidently fond of a joke. The pale, quiet looking, and rather corpulent Prince, sitting near him, with his clean shaven face and loose-hanging garments, is the representative of one of the oldest families in the empire, and after holding important offices in the state, now employs his time happily in the study of old books. The stout dark man, with a moustache on his unexpressive face, is the Governor of the province; he has the unmistakable look of the untravelled Russian digni-

tary, heavy, sensual, arrogant yet cunning. His Secretary, who bears an ancient and noble name, pays particular attention to the bottle within his reach, to prepare himself, doubtless, for a performance, with which he will favour you after dinner, of a nauseous scene, in which, regardless of the presence of ladies, he simulates the disgusting contortions and coarse language of a drunken Russianized German. That handsome, middle-aged man, with the long beard and dark flowing locks, who drinks so indiscriminately and talks so loud, is a priest, whose odd notions and free tongue have brought him into discredit with his bishop. The land steward is also here, a Swede, and one of the best informed and most gentlemanly men present. The doctor, a German, is rather grotesque than interesting; he is strongly persuaded of the virtue of hydropathy, and converses in bad French, in preference to good German. Beside the genial tempered and timid Russian artist, who has a pleasant word for every one, sits an Englishman, and among the servants in waiting behind the guests, a French valet, who completes

the medley of nations, represented in this distant retreat of a Russian nobleman. There is one individual among the company, whose anomalous position of half dependant, half relative, arises from a custom very common with ladies in Russia, of adopting children, and bringing them up. This young lady, of the true native type, dark complexion, bright black eyes, melancholy expression, and graceful little figure, rather inclined to *embonpoint*, is complete in all the accomplishments of the day; music, drawing, and the modern languages, yet, though she calls the great lady "mamma," she is in reality nothing more than a governess to her young foster sisters, and will, probably, in the end, marry either the village doctor, or the family tutor. The table is filled up by the young members of the family, their tutors and governesses, who take part in the conversation without restraint. Even a little child is there, with his nurse standing behind him, and the propriety of his behaviour seems to justify the system of instructing the young mind, thus early, in the ways of the world. The dinner

lasts about an hour and a half, the intervals between the courses being long; the cloth is not removed for dessert, and when the ladies rise, the gentlemen accompany them to the drawing room, where coffee is served immediately, and the guests rapidly disperse.

Various modes of pastime are resorted to in these country residences; at the places which I visited, there was shooting, boating, coursing the hare, picnic making, long-rides through the forests, and long drives to see the country round. The *Gospodsky Familia* also participates in the merry makings of the peasantry, which are generally of a very quiet and subdued kind. I have been surprised, as well as amused, to see the scramble made by grown up men and women, together with the children, for cakes and nuts that were thrown among them in the hay field. On one festive occasion, commemorating the Saint's day*, of the young lady of the house, sixteen peasant couples were married, and

* The day consecrated to the Saint, after whom an individual is named, for no Russian bears a Christian name that has not its equivalent in the calendar.

received from their *barinn* (master) a horse, cart, and plough each.

For in-door amusements there are in Russian country houses the usual resources of billiards, bagatelle, chess, draughts, and all the other games of chance set forth by Hoyle. Besides these there is very often a library, and in one mansion that I was staying at there was even an observatory, constructed by a former proprietor, who had a taste for astronomy. This inclination of the old noble was so decided, that he used to instruct his servants, mere peasants, how to distinguish the various constellations, so that they might come and inform him of their appearance. "Your Excellency, Arcturus is risen," or "Orion is peering above the horizon," was no uncommon announcement in the drawing-room of this enthusiastic disciple of Herschel. The library of this gentleman was very extensive, but having been formed in the reign of the Empress Catherine, and in the infancy of Russian literature, was composed in a great measure of translations into Russ of the principal French, German and English authors.

Even Blackstone's commentaries stood there in a Russian garb by the side of Hume and Smollett's England. Among the *MS.* curiosities of this library were several richly illuminated Greek and Slavonic books of early date; and a work of the modern traveller Pallas written in German. I also stumbled over an original letter of Jean Jacques Rousseau, written in the tone of vainglorious independence so characteristic of the man, and declining the offer of a home in Russia made to him by the old astronomical Count.

In another large collection of books belonging to Prince G—, I saw some black and charred old volumes that had been removed from Moscow after the great fire which drove Napoleon out of that city. It was the only visible remnant of the great disaster which ever came under my observation, so effectually have all traces of the conflagration been obliterated. The remaining contents of this country library, "rich with the spoils of time," were in excellent condition, having been respected even by Murat, who took up his quarters in the house

at the time of the French invasion. Many of the books had been collected at the time of the general dispersion of Royal property which took place in France during the first revolution, and they bore on their red morocco sides the arms of the Bourbon and Orleans families. Among the treasures dear to bibliopoles were a magnificent MS. on vellum of Boccaccio's Decameron in French of the 14th century, two large folio volumes, with splendid illuminations; a still more copiously illuminated "Livre des Chasses," written at an earlier period for an ancestor of the "Duc d'Orleans," and richly embellished with elaborate paintings on every page; and a copy of the rare Dutch and Slavonic Bible, printed by command of Peter the Great, which has been already mentioned. This really valuable collection of books had been grievously neglected; the gentleman who had brought them together with much pains and cost, had died of his wounds in 1813, before the present proprietor, his nephew and heir, was born; and as the estate was an imperial grant of some two centuries ago, and the tenure of it con-

tingent upon the possession of a Christian name, similar to that of the Imperial grantor, the deceased noble's brother was fain to wait till a son was born, whom he could have baptized in the required name ; and that son had to grow to years of discretion, before the interests of the property were really attended to. The taste for book rarities has been growing of late years in Russia ; and it will doubtless appear strange to many of my readers, that the impetuous Grand Duke Constantine, whose present reputation is so warlike, has been known to sit up a great part of the night, attempting, with the assistance of an adept in that branch of knowledge, to decipher an ancient Slavonic manuscript. Other marks of a literary tendency have been shown by the Imperial house of Russia. I have seen the *MS.* "memoirs of her own time" written by Catherine II. ; and there is said to be in existence a volume of memoirs written by the late Empress Elizabeth, wife of Alexander I., which she desired should be published fifty or sixty years after her death. Such a work would be most curious, if it only

revealed the particulars of the strange project, attributed to Alexander, soon after his accession, of flying to America, with the lady of his choice, to live a happy emigrant; and allowing his Empress to do something of the same kind.

I have spoken thus far of the noble and wealthy landowners, who pass only a portion of their time in the country, as a relief from the fashionable frivolity and costly splendour of their life in the capital. But the genuine Pameshtchik, whose whole existence is spent on his isolated domain, save when he pays his rare and brief visits to the metropolis, or attends the provincial elections in the country-town, is a personage of another stamp. Supremely indolent, he lives in a state of complete vacuity, and as though he felt that intellectual exercise of any kind, would defeat the great end of his being; namely, the active employment of his digestive organs. The occupations of each day, such as they are, succeed one another with unfailing regularity, somewhat in the following manner. On first waking in the morning, a servant, as dirty as himself, brings him the

chibouk, a large cherry-stick pipe. His Excellency, a large, lusty man, with strongly-marked features, dark hair and eyes, bushy eyebrows and moustache, who is attired in a soiled Tartar dressing-gown, smokes, not only before but during and after his early morning-meal of tea and *soukharee* (rusks). The village bailiff or *Starosta* then makes his appearance, to give an account of the previous day's proceedings in the fields, and to endure patiently the outpourings of his master's abuse. *Zaftrak*, the real breakfast or luncheon, ensues, and consists of an extensive supply of the most solid materials, after which follows a drive in a droschky, to look at the peasants working, and find fault with the *prikashtchiks* or overlookers; this business accomplished, he returns to a copious and greasy dinner, to which succeeds a two-hours' sleep. The eternal cherry-stick pipe again affords a soothing occupation then tea flavoured with rum is served, and succeeded by a few games at billiards or cards; a snack of supper, hot and fat, winds up the toils of the day, after which he finally retreats to bed, to prepare for another

day of similar labours. The lady of the establishment wiles away her time in a corresponding manner, substituting for the pipe countless paper cigarettes, and for the *starosta* and *prikashtchiks*, the governess and waiting-maids; should there be a tutor in the house, a little sentimental coquetry with that personage, serves to relieve the monotony of her ordinary pastime.

The behaviour of landlords of the calibre just described towards their serfs, is not always, it must be observed, really harsh, so much as it is capricious; but perhaps nothing exhibited to my mind the humanising influence of science and letters, even in their feeblest manifestation, so forcibly, as the conduct of a Russian *Pameshtchik*, imbued with a taste for photography, homœopathy, and some other innocent "ologies," in ameliorating the condition of the serfs committed to his rule and governance. The gentleman I allude to seemed, indeed, a father to his people; and among other things he took care that they were married and given in marriage. No peasant, it should be remarked,

can marry without the consent of the lord ; and it is not unusual for young people, or their parents, to apply to the master or his steward for a spouse. The following colloquy, which I once heard at a dinner-table, sounded strangely to my ears. "Well, Pavel Petrovitch," said a gentleman to his steward, "have you got that man married yet, whom I sent you this morning." "I have found him a wife, your excellency, the parents have settled matters, and the couple will be betrothed shortly." It is in fact the interest of proprietors to encourage marriages ; and it has even been necessary to enact a law that forbids any serf to marry before he is eighteen, in order to prevent the moral and physical evils that used to result from prematurely early marriages. The wealth of a Russian landlord is described, not by the number of acres he possesses, but by the number of his serfs, counting only the male population, according to the latest census. The census is taken every eight years, and upon the data which it furnishes the capitation-tax is levied, regardless of the births and deaths that occur

in the interval, between one census and another. A remarkable and very ingenious satiric fiction, entitled *Mertruyje Dooshee*, or *The Dead Souls*, by a talented Russian novelist, Gogel, has been founded on this fact, and illustrates so admirably various phases of Russian life that I venture to give a brief account of the story. It represents a sharper, who, after attaining to some rank in the service, and having failed in many roguish attempts to enrich himself, resorts to the singular scheme of purchasing, at a nominal value, the dead serfs of various proprietors whom he thus relieves from the tax that would be exacted from them until the ensuing census, for serfs whose services have been lost for ever.

But, it will be asked, what could the buyer do with dead serfs? The answer to this most apposite question reveals two remarkable features of the Russian system of government, namely, first, the immense influence of what has been called red-tapeism, or the power of conducting the business of the country purely by written documents; and secondly, the potent instrument wielded by the crown for enfeebling

the nobility, in the form of a Lombard or Mortgage Bank. The following short explanation will make the process clear. As serfs cannot be sold without the land they live on, unless the purchaser undertakes to plant them on some other unoccupied land, the sharper Tchichikoff invents an estate in the Government of Cherson, on which he pretends to be desirous of founding a colony. Thus prepared, he goes from one proprietor to another, and by skilfully acting upon their cupidity, obtains from each, for a trifling sum, a deed of sale for so many peasants (dead), whose names are duly written out. Armed with these, he arrives at the government town of the province; and having made himself very agreeable to the President of the tribunal and other officials, they expedite the public registry of the documents, and thus constitute him master of several hundred serfs which have no existence. His next step is to present himself at the Lombard, where money is lent on real property at 5 per cent interest; to exhibit his papers, state his desire to mortgage, and secure at once a large amount of

ready money, upon which he lives sumptuously, till the cheat explodes, and he is sent to Siberia. The novelist has left his tale unfinished : but what he has written displays with graphic power many of the amusing peculiarities of the Russian *pameshtchik*. The temptation held out by the Lombard, of easily obtaining funds, has proved very dangerous to the fortunes of the Russian nobility, who are naturally excessive in their prodigality ; and as the establishment is also a Bank of deposit, for the investment at 4 per cent of sums so small even as £5, the system contrives cleverly to make the prudent subjects of the Tzar furnish the improvident with means for their extravagance ; while the Crown ultimately obtains possession of the landed property, emancipating its serfs, and securing its revenues. No wonder that the old Russian families have nearly disappeared from the face of society, and that the rich men of the day are sprung from the class of government *employés*.

A few words on the education of young people of rank and fortune in Russia, will here not be inappropriate. Of late years, most

laudable exertions have been made in this important matter. I do not mean the efforts made by the Government in public schools, where restrictions on the knowledge to be communicated, and the corrupt system that prevails among directors and teachers, combine rather to retard, than advance the intellectual progress of the rising generation. But the attention paid by many parents to the education of their children at home is worthy of admiration. To secure for them a large instruction (if I may so express it), tutors are invited from distant countries, well paid, and very often pensioned, after the pupils' entrance into life. Great exertions are made by the Russians to acquire a facility in foreign languages, and the plan pursued is generally as follows. The infant baptized within twenty-four hours of its birth, is entrusted to the care of a *Kormilitza* or wet nurse, a healthy native peasant woman, whose costume is of a peculiar old fashioned, and expensive style, and who exercises a capricious sway over almost all the other members of the household. An English nurse succeeds

the *Kormilitza*, in order to give the child habits of tidiness, and to teach it the English pronunciation, a result not always successfully achieved, especially where the *bonne* happens to be, as not unfrequently is the case, an Irish or Scotch woman. The noble scion is then handed over to a French governess, to acquire her language, and to practise *les belles manieres*. The learned German tutor follows the lively French governess, and indoctrinates the youth in all kinds of knowledge, besides that of the German language. In addition to these instructors, at stated hours in the week a priest is employed to instruct in religion, as also masters for drawing, music, dancing, and gymnastical exercises, and a *dyadya*, or Russian man-nurse, to take walks and drives with the young gentleman; and practise him in his native language. Latterly it has become the fashion to have competent masters to give instruction in the Russian language, an acquirement all the more necessary, since the Emperor Nicholas insisted upon all examinations, at the University or in the Imperial schools, being made in Russ.

The following anecdote, bearing upon this subject, was related to me by a Russian tutor, who had been called in to a great man's house in consequence of the circumstance to which it refers. The late Emperor, being present at the wedding of a daughter of one of his ministers, found himself in contact with her little brother, employed as is customary to carry an image at the head of the nuptial procession. When his Majesty attempted to open a conversation with this intelligent youth in Russ, the boy could not reply, but said something in French, at which the Tzar's displeasure was so great, and so strongly expressed, that all the ministers and courtiers at once hastened to procure Russian teachers for their children, that they might escape a predicament so likely to bring them under the ban of Imperial displeasure.

Having gone through a course at home, the young men of family enter the Guards as *younkers*, wearing the uniform and performing the duty of private soldiers or rather of non-commissioned officers, for a period of one or

two years. If destined for the civil service, they enter the Lyceum, a school from which the extensive diplomatic staff of the government is usually furnished, or pass through the Law school, or the University.

Young Russians, on their entrance into life, when the period of education is over, are no better than the dissipated young men of other countries. Theatres, masquerades, balls, assemblies, card and billiard parties, amusements, extravagancies, and frivolities of every kind fill up their many vacant hours, frequently to the damage of their fortunes. The open air sports of hunting, boating, skating and the like, are almost unknown in Russia, except horse-racing, which is made attractive solely by the betting which accompanies it; it is practised not only in summer on a course like those in England, but is vigorously maintained in winter by trotting matches on the ice. The present Emperor Alexander used to take great interest in this amusement, and the trotting ground was always laid out upon the Neva, in front of the Winter Palace. As an illustration of man-

ners, I may mention an anecdote current in St. Petersburg, and bearing testimony to the gross perception of humour belonging even to the educated Russian mind. A young noble, intending to go to a masquerade, procured a peculiar fashioned costume in black, which he adjusted to his person, together with a frightful horned mask, set off with all the demoniacal appendages popularly attributed to the person of the Evil One. Thus arrayed and well dosed with champagne, he presented himself at the door of the assembly rooms, where naturally enough he was refused admittance. Consoling himself for this disappointment with another bottle, he threw his fur cloak around him, removed the mask from his face, and entered a hackney sledge to return home. The driver, a sturdy villain, seeing the drowsy condition of his fare and the costly cloak he wore, thought to profit by the opportunity, and unperceived drove to the most lonely spot he knew in the suburbs. Suddenly the sledge stopped, and the *Izvoshtchik* turned round on his seat, saying, "*Noo barin davi shooboo,*" "Now, master, give

up your pelisse." The young man, roused by danger from his stupor, replied, "*say chass,*" "directly," and rising as if to take off the coveted vestment, he adroitly put the mask on his face, and turning full upon the thief he stretched out his arms at full length, and exclaimed in a deeply solemn tone, "*E die menyai tvoya doosha,*" "And give me thy soul." The effect was instantaneous and fatal; the conscience-stricken rogue fell down dead. The masquerader drove the body to the nearest police station, gave his name, explained the circumstance, and there I believe the matter ended.

Politics are never hardly thought of as an occupation for the young Russian mind.

The severity with which political delinquencies on the part of the nobility have ever been visited by imperial wrath is matter of history. Hundreds of families were rendered desolate by the imprisonment, exile, and death, which followed the outbreak of 1825, when Nicolas ascended the throne. In 1848, when the Revolution fever was convulsing Europe, an

association of young men of extreme views in politics was discovered to exist. The Government was on the alert, and in one night upwards of 300 individuals were seized and conveyed to the fortress.

So sweeping was the seizure, that an acquaintance of mine who had been once seen at an evening party in the house of one of the confederates, found himself a prisoner in the hands of the police, and conducted to share the imprisonment of the conspirators. He, however, was released on the third day of his captivity, as were all the rest except about twenty whose proceedings underwent a long and strict scrutiny before a commission specially appointed by the Tzar. These were all young men of good family and superior education; one of them, whom I knew very well, was a fashionable drawing-room dandy, about 22 years old, who looked anything but a revolutionary firebrand. I shall never forget the dismay and anxiety expressed in the blank face of every member of his father's household, when I called on the morning of the arrest. In the night, about three o'clock, an ominous

green coach, having been driven into a neighbouring yard, to escape observation, the gensd'armes had presented themselves at the door of the house, and obtaining admittance, bade the servants not to disturb their master, as they wanted his son only. Marching into the chamber where the young man lay in bed, they swept both it and the next room of all the books and papers they could lay their hands on, and arrested their prisoner. The old gentleman, who unfortunately for his son's present position, had been implicated in the affair of 1825, having been roused, came out to the officers, and besought them to delay the discharge of their orders till daylight, giving as a reason for his demand, that the young man was suffering from illness. Their orders being imperative, they could not do this, but at once conducted the conspirator to the green coach, which bore him to the fortress. Here he manfully upheld his opinions throughout the wearisome examinations of the Commission, specially appointed to inquire into the affair, and is even reported to have confronted the Emperor Nicholas himself with the boldest assertions of his political

creed. The contest was, however, unequal; the young man and his comrades were sentenced to be shot, although they were said to have been found guilty by the Commission, of high misdemeanour only, but *not* worthy of death. Such at least was the prevalent opinion of the tenor of the sentence in St. Petersburg at the time, and the subsequent proceedings which I am about to describe, justify the suspicion that Nicholas was guilty of an act of wanton cruelty. The prisoners were taken early one morning to the *Simeonoffsky Pole*, a large parade ground on the outskirts of the city, ranged in order before a detachment of armed soldiers, their eyes bandaged, the word of command given "to present arms," all the agonies of an approaching bloody death endured, when an aide-de-camp of the Emperor, galloped on to the field, proclaiming his Majesty's clemency, in granting the traitors their lives, and only punishing them with perpetual exile and hard labour, in some instances to be performed "in irons." The punishments were found to be carefully graduated according to the age and character of each individual, and must have

been the sentences originally recorded by the Commission against the prisoners, before the Tzar had bidden them to make it "death," so that he might have the credit of magnanimously pardoning them. This little bit of dramatic effect cost a brother of the youth I have been speaking of, the temporary loss of his reason. What effect it produced on some of the sufferers themselves, it would be difficult to conjecture. My young friend was condemned to live at Orenburg, on the frontiers of Asia, in the capacity of a common soldier, though his education and numerous accomplishments had marked out for him a diplomatic career, and at the time of his arrest he was engaged in Count Nesselrode's office. The last I heard of him was, that he wanted books, when his mother requested me to recommend some English novels for his amusement, and it may be gratifying to the authors of Jane Eyre and David Copperfield to know, that their works soothed the lonely hours of the captive of Orenburg.

The facts related above came within my own knowledge, but the following instance of the prompt despotism of the late Tzar in punishing

an act that implied disrespect to his person, was communicated to me by a German steward residing in the interior. He told me that when living near Saratof, an escort on its way to Siberia, arrived in the village under his management, where they seemed glad enough to rest for a day or two. They were conducting a prisoner from Georgia, one Count P., who was loaded with irons, and in a pitiable condition of rags and dirt. The good Teuton, with the consent of the guard, gave hospitable shelter to the young man, whom he found to be an accomplished gentleman, and fluent in several languages, German among the rest. His story, as related to his entertainer, was brief and tragical ; he had married the niece of the Governor of a province in which he was engaged on military service ; his wife proving faithless to him, he shot her and her betrayer at the same instant, and being brought before the Governor to answer for this double murder, and still in a state of blind exasperation, he fired a pistol at the man whose relationship to the unhappy deceased only reminded the prisoner of his own dishonour. The ball missing its aim, went

through a portrait of the Emperor, suspended, as is usual, above the Governor's official seat. A report was at once forwarded to St. Petersburg, in which very little was said about the crime actually committed, the scandal of which would in some measure have redounded to the Governor's disadvantage, but much stress was laid on the violent spirit of insubordination evinced by the criminal, in firing at the effigies of his Imperial Majesty. The Emperor's sign-manual ordering the delinquent "to Siberia in chains," was quickly returned, and the young officer was on his way to exile when he thus narrated his story to my friend. Once, on the road, the miserable cortége had been met by the *Naslednik*; or Heir-Apparent, now Emperor Alexander II., who having inquired into the case, seemed to think something might have been done to rescue the young noble from his melancholy doom, but for the "suspicious" circumstance of the bullet striking the picture.

A humiliating, yet, under the circumstances, a needful check maintained by the Tzar upon his nobility and their erratic habits, is the necessity under which every Russian subject la-

hours, of obtaining special permission from his sovereign before he can travel abroad. This permission, when procured, costs each person 500 silver roubles (£75); and must be renewed at least once a year, and the same sum be paid. The tax on passports for foreign countries was much smaller formerly, but the Emperor Nicholas, resolved to put down the denationalising habit of living out of Russia, gradually raised the amount to be paid, and thus saved himself the trouble of refusing applications for leave. Some wealthy men, who prefer the climate of Italy to that of their native land, have to make large presents of money to the State, besides the payment of the regular tax, in order to secure the renewal of their passport.

At the time of the Great Exhibition in London, the late Emperor was extremely tenacious of these furloughs, as he expected Hyde Park would be the focus of revolution, and a place of meeting for all the discontented spirits of Europe. A friend of mine, by birth a foreigner, but who had been naturalized, and had entered the Government service, applied, in 1851, for permission to go to England and

extend his chemical knowledge at the Crystal Palace. Considerable time elapsed before the request reached the monarch, who wrote against it, "No; he can study chemistry in Russia." My friend was so mortified at this refusal, and so bent upon seeing the Exhibition, that he gave up his service, took steps, as allowed by the law, to free himself from his allegiance to the Tzar, and left the country as a foreigner. The process was so tedious that he did not reach London till after the Exhibition was closed, but fortunately before any great number of the objects within it had been dispersed.

CHAPTER VIII.

Russian Officials—Their Organization and Rank—Character and Power—"Monte Christo"—Munificent gift to the Emperor—Pilfering and Bribery—Anecdote of a Police Major—The provincial *Tchinovnik*—Story of Official villany—Gogel's "Revisor"—The Empress and the Brandy-farmer.

THE name *Tchinovnik*, applied to Russian officials, is derived from the word *Tchin*, signifying rank; but, though applicable to every man who obtains titles of dignity by service in the State, the term is, in practice, restricted to those who serve the crown in a civil capacity. This extremely large and powerful class of Russian subjects is organized upon a military basis, being divided into fourteen classes or ranks of the same value as the various grades in the army. They are also obliged to appear always in *vitz-moondir*, as it is called, or vice-uniform,

and though wielding only a pen as their ordinary weapon, on great occasions, and in full dress, they have to wear a sword. The anomaly so often noticed by travellers in Russia, of civil establishments being placed under the charge of "generals," is thus partly explained: for a civilian having attained to the fifth, fourth, or third class, assumes the equivalent military title of "general," and his wife that of "*generalsha*," as having a more imposing sound than the mere civil distinction.

The administrative departments of the Russian Government, so notoriously corrupt, are completely in the hands of these *tchinovniks*, whose almost universal practices of malversation and peculation have procured for the whole body an unenviable reputation, which some honourable individuals among them may be found not to deserve. The established system of routine, however, is so monstrous, that nothing but the absolute power of the Tzar can break through its trammels; and so strongly is it established, as not unfrequently to have defeated, or successfully impeded, the expressed purpose of imperial will. The late Emperor

felt this inconvenience so keenly that he wished to annihilate a system which gave the *tchinovniks* so much power; but he found, upon inquiry, that all the affairs of the country, being carried on by the silent system of written documents, were so completely in the hands of these men, that hopeless confusion would arise from any change to which they were not willing parties, and was therefore obliged to desist from his design.

About two years ago several of the Tzar's most tried servants and old generals, who formed a commission for the management of the old invalids or pensioners, were disgraced and put under arrest, because their president, a *tchinovnik* of high rank, in collusion with the secretary, had embezzled the funds of the establishment to the amount of some million of roubles. This president, *Pollithoffsky*, by name, though risen from the lowest *tchin*, had of late years been living in a style of oriental luxury, which the most wealthy and prodigal noble in St. Petersburg could not surpass. People who attended his brilliant assemblies and extravagant orgies wondered at times

whence proceeded his boundless resources, and they called him after the hero of Dumas' novel *Monte Christo*. He had married a wife reputed to be rich, a circumstance which for a while prevented the suspicion of anything wrong; but the crisis came at last, there was no money to pay the pensioners, or their poor widows, and Pollitkoffsky died suddenly in the night, as was thought, by poison.

The Emperor was furious when the facts came to his knowledge, he ordered the splendid funeral which the widow was preparing to be stopped at once, all the decorations and honours which the deceased had ever received to be taken from his house, such property as he had left to be confiscated, and the body to be buried in the most unceremonious manner possible.

All the living members of the commission were ordered under arrest, and their property sequestered for a time; among them one of the oldest and most favoured ministers who had been only nominally associated with the commission alone escaped this disgrace. Their principal culpability appears to have been negligence and misplaced confidence in their acting

colleague, whose ingenious mode of presenting accounts completely deceived them. He informed them from time to time that the large balances which remained in the treasury chest, had been invested in the Commercial Bank at 4 per cent, and exhibited on the green cloth piles of Bank bills, of which the uppermost only on each pile was genuine, all below it being forms imperfectly filled up, and worth not a doit. Seeing that the President and Secretary were both parties to this deception, it is not surprising that it should have escaped the vigilance of three or four old generals.

It was on this occasion, and in order to make up the appalling deficit in the treasury of the invalids, that the Emperor condescended to receive from one of his wealthy subjects the munificent gift of (if I was not misinformed) a million roubles, bestowing upon the donor, in exchange, a decoration which the latter had no prospect of obtaining by any other kind of merit.

The prevalence of petty pilfering and bribery, in all departments of the Russian service, had long been notorious, and the best justification attempted for such degrading practices is the

niggardly salary paid by the Government to its officials. •Indeed, the number of the latter is so great that to pay them adequately would require a revenue twice as large as that which Russia now enjoys, yet it is really hard to understand why they are so numerous, when half as many well paid *employés* would do the work as efficiently, unless it be that the Crown seeks to retain every one of its educated subjects in its service and under its direct control. A skilful use of means in obtaining bribes, such as well-timed delay in producing a document; a significant opening of the official drawer; a few civil words, and at the same time a provoking statement of difficulties, enables many an official ostensibly in the receipt of a salary of £80 per annum, to live at the rate of £500 or £600. A story in point is told of a police major in St. Petersburg, who dashing along the Nevsky in a handsome droschky and pair, was met by the Emperor Nicholas. His Majesty being in a lighter mood than was usual with him when in public, stopped the officer and inquired what salary he received from the crown. On being informed that it was 2000 roubles banco, the

Tzar desired to know how he contrived to keep so smart an equipage and such good horses. "By presents, your Imperial Majesty, that I receive from the kind people in my district," was the candid answer. The Emperor laughed at his straight-forward frankness, and giving him some money, replied, "I believe I live in your quarter, and have neglected sending you my present." The existence of bribery in his dominions was a fact only too familiar to the Imperial ears, but plain speaking on the subject was a new and so far a pleasing variety offered to the mind of an absolute sovereign.

The provincial *tchinovnik* is not behind his compeer of the capital in the art of making money; though he may be inferior to him in the acquirements and graces of civilised life. I was once however nearly entrapped into the opinion, that *tchinovniks* were learned men; by an incident that occurred in the country, when a man came to inquire into the death of two peasants, who had perished from the noxious gases, engendered in a potato-pit. He put a lighted candle down into the hole, to discover the presence of the fatal vapour; but my satis-

faction at what I thought to be the tchinovnik's scientific appreciation of the value of oxygen, was soon dissipated by his simple exclamation, that "he had only followed the government orders." As a set-off against this simplicity, I must relate a specimen of provincial villany that can hardly be surpassed, either in ingenuity or atrocity. The circumstances were detailed to me by a French gentleman, who had passed some time in the government of Smolensk, where the facts occurred. A substantial miller, in that province, had the misfortune to lose one of his men by a sudden but natural death, which, being duly reported to the authorities of the district, brought down a tchinovnik, appointed to inquire into the cause of death. The miller was absent from home when the official arrived, and installed himself in the *trakteer*, or tavern of the village. With a due sense of his importance, the representative of the law's majesty sent to the miller's house for the best meat and drink that it afforded. The miller's wife, in an unlucky moment, saying, "if 'tis worth having, 'tis worth fetching," refused to send anything, and so grievously

offended the official, who vowed to have his revenge. As it was winter, the corpse of the deceased, left in an outhouse, was frozen hard; and the worthy tchinovnik at once ordered it to be placed on the heated stove, and beneath it a number of twigs to be laid. When removed from this position, the back of the body exhibited marks of innumerable stripes; which being publicly displayed before the assembled villagers by this pattern of coroners, he exclaimed, "You see that this poor man, who was said to have died from natural causes, has evidently been beaten to death. Has he or has he not been beaten to death?" No one dared to dispute the dictum of a tchinovnik; so the report was made in accordance with this verdict, and the judge returned to head-quarters. The poor miller, on his return home, was distracted at hearing of what had happened; and taking all his available wealth with him, he hastened immediately to the town, and flung himself at the feet of the offended *employé*. "What can I do, *batuschká*," said the malicious individual, in the blandest manner; "you are come too late, the affair has passed out of my hands, and will to-

morrow or the next day be brought before the Governor." "Oh, do, Batuschka, accept a little present, and settle this unfortunate business for me, or I am a ruined man," said the victim of this rascality. "Well, it will be a difficult matter to arrange, but I will see what can be done for you." After allowing a sufficient time to elapse, the tchinovnik sent again for the miller, and told him that the affair was serious, and might end in Siberia; that he had many colleagues to satisfy in order to stop its further progress, and that for less than 10,000 roubles (banco) it could not be quashed. This sum, nearly £500, the unlucky miller had to pay, at the sacrifice of nearly all his wealth, in order to secure his personal liberty. The official, having of course pocketed all the money himself (for, in anticipation of the miller's visit, he had delivered no report), then returned to the village, submitted the corpse anew to the melting process, but without the twigs, re-assembled the villagers, pointed out to them the smooth skin of the deceased, and rated them soundly for having dared to assert that the "good miller had beaten a faithful servant to death."

One of the most striking and amusing pictures of the peccadilloes of this class of Russians has been painted by a countryman of their own, Gogel, the author already quoted, in his comedy called the "Revisor," or comptroller of public accounts. The expected arrival of this dreaded functionary in a certain provincial town throws the whole bureaucracy of the place into consternation, and the expedients they adopt to escape exposure of their malpractices, and a mistake they make with respect to the person of the officer in question, form the groundwork of some highly amusing scenes. Comedies of this kind are continually being played on the stage of Russian life, and I am tempted to relate one that was the public talk in St. Petersburg not many years ago. The brandy-farmers had been accused in high quarters of adulterating the spirit they sold, and of diminishing the size of the bottles in which, by the contract of their monopoly, they were bound to furnish it, sealed up and stamped, to the consumers. A commission of inquiry was hinted at, which, coming to the ears of the monopolists, caused them no little alarm. One of the wealthiest and cleverest of these gentry,

undismayed by the threatening aspect of things, at once devised a plan of escape as bold as it was ingenious. Being acquainted with two ladies in the palace, he took occasion to invite them to a grand banquet, and, in the confidence of post-prandial conversation, he asked them what they did with the money they did not spend. On their informing him it was invested in the Lombard (Mortgage Bank) at 4 per cent., he obligingly offered to take it for them into his own keeping, and allow them 8 per cent., which his many opportunities of investing money enabled him to do with ease. The ladies, knowing him to be very rich, gladly accepted his offer, and transferred their savings to his care. He permitted a short time to elapse before he paid them a visit, and then told them, with many artful expressions of grief, that he was a ruined man. The dismay of his victims was succeeded by astonishment when they heard that it was in their power to save him and the property they had entrusted to him. He explained to them the circumstances of the commission, and said he was sure that if they used their influence with her Ma-

jesty it might be stopped. They did appeal to the Empress with tears and lamentations, representing the danger to which their fortunes were exposed, and her Majesty, who does not like the excitement of strong emotions, and yet had a regard for her attendants, consented to ask the Emperor to stop the inquiry ; a request which the Tzar acceded to on a principle he had long adopted—of not refusing any petition which his consort might think fit to address to him.

CHAPTER IX.

The Citizen—Guilds—The *Koopetz*—Visit of Tallow-merchants to the Great Exhibition—Habits of the Merchant—Debtors' Prison—The fraudulent Bankrupt—Payment of Debts—Social intercourse—Newspaper Press—Russian “art of conversation” — Merchant Princes—Manufactures—Dress of the people.

It may not be inappropriate here to introduce the remarks I have to make on citizen life. No man in Russia can trade either as a wholesale or retail merchant, unless he be either a member of one of the three Guilds, or enrolled in the *Mestchantsvo*, a kind of corporation formed of the lowest class of burghers. The privileges belonging to the first Guild, namely liberty to buy and sell, wholesale or retail, for exportation or importation, are purchased by an annual tax, dependent on the declared capital, but never less than 1000 roubles (£150.), and those of the other Guilds by sums proportionate to

the diminished facilities for trading. The money derived from this source and paid into the *Dooma* or Town-hall, is, or ought to be, applied to the town use by the municipal authorities, at the head of whom is the *Golova Dooma* or mayor. This last office seems to be the only one of a municipal character in any way coveted by the merchants, even in St. Petersburg, as the many other honorary posts, which these persons are called upon to fill, in the Tribunal of Commerce and other departments of the Town-hall, are not only onerous, but unattended with either credit "or renown."

The old fashioned bearded *Koopetz* (merchant) with his portly body robed in a long blue caftan, and whose only mode of keeping accounts is by means of the *schott* (a series of beads arranged decimally on wires), is now rapidly disappearing before a generation of clean shaven, fashionably dressed dandies, who have been educated at the commercial schools established during the last two reigns. I once travelled with a party of five tallow merchants going to the Great Exhibition in London, and only one among them retained the beard and caftan, and even he, at

the table d'hôte in Hamburg, appeared brilliantly arrayed in a sort of hunting coat, with resplendent gilt buttons. The whole party was very amusing; especially on board the steamer, and before they had assumed the overstrained manner and efforts after politeness, consequent upon the fear they had of committing themselves before foreigners. They had never been to sea before, and were surprised at the lovely calm which prevailed on the water during a three days' passage from St. Petersburg to Travemunde. They consumed an enormous quantity of sherry and champagne in that short time; every opportunity was seized for drinking healths, and passing the bottle round; a lady musician for lack of a piano, sang tunes for the company to dance to, and her health was frequently drunk in champagne at the expense of the Russians. A journal was kept by one of them, who would suddenly disappear from deck as a rock or an island came in sight, and at sunset, and on occasion of any other noteworthy phenomenon, to fix his impressions on paper before they fled; I discovered, however, that the journal was very often a mere subterfuge

for a quiet pint of sherry. I parted company with them at Hamburg, but heard subsequently that they had been enraptured with London, where they had been sumptuously entertained by the Russia merchants, to whom they gave a splendid return banquet at the Albion, before leaving again for their own country. I afterwards learnt, however, that the results of their journey were not on the whole fortunate; they fell into a kind of mercantile ambushade, being induced to transact largely in the London market themselves, contrary to the established practice of employing some of the foreign commission merchants, in St. Petersburg, and their speculations being rash, were far from successful. The way of life of the merchant class at home exhibits more costliness than elegance. A merchant must have a splendid prancing horse to his sledge or droschky, though he may reside in the shabbiest apartments possible, with an entrance, probably through the foulest of court-yards, and up the filthiest of stone-stairs. The viands for his repasts are usually of the most expensive kind, but they are served in so slovenly a manner, that there is no comfort in sitting down to

them. He spends considerable sums of money on all fête days, visits the *hatcheli* (whirligigs) and *balagans* (itinerant shows) during the Butter-week and at Easter ; but makes up for this extravagance by a rigorous stinginess at other times ; and by being very hard at a bargain always. His wife will appear in public, robed in the richest silks, but with only a kerchief upon her head, while her daughters, being of the new generation, and having learnt French, German, and the use of the piano-forte, wear bonnets of the most florid style, and most striking colours. He is a rigorous observer of Lent, eating hardly anything in that season but fish and caviare, though he drinks plenty of tea, and is not afraid of spirituous liquors ; the sugar for his tea is purified by a process that obviates the use of blood ; and the cream is made from crushed almonds, so that he may avoid all animal matter in his food. The last week in Lent, it may be observed, is kept with very great strictness by all classes of people in Russia, who then *gavaït* as they call it, *i.e.* prepare for taking the sacrament on the last day of the week : before this solemn act, they attend the church-service

several times every day; they ask pardon of their acquaintance, should they have offended them in any way; and they almost deprive themselves of meat and drink, so rigid is their fast. It is during Easter that the wealthy visit the debtors' prison, and release some of the prisoners by paying their debts, as an act of charity and mercy, becoming the solemn season.

The number of persons confined for debt, to whom this benevolence can be extended, is limited by the fact, that the creditors are compelled to pay for the debtor's maintenance while in prison; so that they are willing to accept the smallest "composition," rather than resort to the last extremity of the law. This state of things tends to encourage fraudulent bankruptcies, which are very frequent; and which have been made the object of satire on the Russian stage, a place much resorted to by the mercantile class. I have read a drama written a few years ago for the Russian theatre, unsparingly exposing this system with a vigorous hand. The principal character is a tradesman, who had been successful in business; but who has resolved to make one more grand speculation before he

retires. By straining his credit to its utmost limits, he largely increases his actual wealth, which he then makes over to a shopman in whom he feels confidence, and declares himself unable to pay his creditors more than $\frac{1}{4}$ th per cent. Rather than pay for their debtor's imprisonment, they accept the composition offered; and the bankrupt rejoices in the success of his stratagem, till he discovers that the shopman, who is secretly in league with his (the tradesman's) daughter, refuses to give up the property that has been fraudulently confided to him; and, of course, the cozened rogue has no redress.

Transactions of a kind, which this drama but too faithfully represents, have done much to destroy the principle of credit among traders in Russia. The native dealers do business only for ready money, and entertain little respect for the wisdom of any man who gives them credit. This, perhaps, may be the reason why the foreign shopkeepers in St. Petersburg and Moscow are specially favoured with the patronage of the Russian nobility, who do not, in the least, object to get into debt. An amusing

instance of the repugnance which a Russian feels to paying a debt, however slight, once occurred to myself. The trifling sum of ten roubles was due to me from a lawyer, upon whom I called for a settlement. He received me very pleasantly, acknowledged the debt, but could not pay me then; we entered into general conversation; and as we grew more cordial, he said he thought he had three roubles in the house, which he would give me on account; this I accepted, not without a smile at this sudden relaxing of his purse-strings; our conversation proceeded, and became rather animated, to the manifest satisfaction of my debtor, who, before I left, paid me the remaining seven roubles, though he had at first solemnly assured me, there was not a rouble in his house. He yielded to *bonhomie*, and a spirit of good fellowship, what the sense of duty would never have urged him to give up; and his conduct furnishes a trait, highly characteristic of the Russians.

Social intercourse among the mercantile class is assiduously maintained by ceremonious visits on birthdays and other fête days; by balls and

tea-drinkings in winter, and suppers at the *datchas* in summer, when incredible quantities of wine are consumed. The custom of staying at home, on one set evening in the week for the reception of friends, is very prevalent; and is recommended by its great convenience, since every man's evening, being thus well-known, invitations are neither given nor required, and a vast amount of trouble is obviated. Tea, talk, tobacco, and cards are the prominent ingredients of enjoyment on occasions of this kind. The flow of conversation, indeed, is sometimes perfectly overwhelming to any one, accustomed to the quiet company of books and newspapers. In the absence of a free press, the Russians seek some sort of compensation in colloquial intercourse, which, when the company are well known to each other, often becomes of the most open and unrestrained character. I used to meet a man, holding a post under the Imperial Government, who was accustomed to indulge in the expression of outrageous radicalism, without incurring any personal danger in consequence. His opinions on political matters were known to his official superiors, who also

knew that they were mere abstract opinions, held by a man of a limited circle of acquaintance, and put forth for the mere sake of talk.

Having alluded to newspapers, I may here mention, that I never knew of more than six in St. Petersburg: three in Russian, two in German, and one in French. The Russian are the *Police Gazette*, filled with official announcements and trading advertisements; the *Invalid*, a naval and military journal, formerly edited by Baron Korff; and the *Northern Bee*, which enjoys a certain reputation for the violence with which it attacks whatever is offensive to the law of authority,—its editor was Mr. Bulgarin. The French *Journal de St. Petersbourg* usually contains, besides the ordinary official statements of promotions, &c., a few meagre extracts from English, French, and German papers; it consists of a small sheet of four pages, not much larger than the London Gazette, with occasionally an extra half-sheet when circumstances permit. Of the two German *Zeitung*, I know nothing further than that one is published under the auspices of the Imperial Academy of Sciences.

The volubility of the Russians; facilitated as it is by the expressiveness of their language, becomes very disagreeable from the loud tone which they adopt in speaking. Gesticulation also constitutes an important element in their "art of conversation," in which, I must add, the prevailing feature is the form interrogatory. Inquisitiveness is a characteristic, in which this nation is hardly excelled, even by the free citizens of the United States of America. An English lady of my acquaintance was once questioned by a casual fellow passenger in an omnibus, as to whether she was married, how many children she had, how many servants, what her husband was, how much he made per annum, and how old he was. Money is a very common topic of conversation among these semi-orientals; a friend once observed to me, that it was impossible to pass two Russians in the street without catching the word "rouble" or "copeck" in their conversation; and on making the experiment myself, I found in almost every instance, he was right. In spite of this universal eagerness after gain, there is really very little true commercial enterprise in

Russia; the mercantile spirit there, is pettifoggling, rather than boldly speculative. Men of all ranks, however, are engaged in trade, and names of the nobility may be seen gracing shopdoors; so that the retort of the Englishman to the old sarcasm, of our being "a nation of shopkeepers," struck home, when he said "Our merchants are princes, and your princes are merchants."

I know a colonel in the Guards and aid-de-camp of one of the ministers, who always took contracts for army cloth himself, and executed them in factories of his own, erected solely for the fabrication of that coarse kind of cloth; he has, besides, extensive glass-works, the produce of which was sold in a shop at St. Petersburg bearing his name. Another colonel, and aid-de-camp to one of the Imperial family, has grown rich by the sale of soap of his own manufacture; and a shop in the Nevsky, where paper is sold, belongs to a general who owns a paper-mill. These undertakings by men of some fortune, are doubtless encouraged by the Tzar's government, which sees the importance of augmenting the manufacturing power of the country. But

though manufactures certainly have much increased in the last twenty years, they are yet far from being adequate to the wants of the people. In 1852, it appears that there were in Russia 380 beet-root sugar factories, many of which, be it observed, en passant, belong to an aristocrat, Count Bobrinsky, one of the wealthiest and most respectable nobles in the Empire. By a calculation that has been recently made, it would seem that Russia, if left to her own resources in respect of manufactures, could furnish no more than one yard of woollen cloth as the annual supply for a whole family, $2\frac{1}{2}$ yards of linen for a whole family per annum, and 3 pounds of soap for five persons throughout the year. Of cotton goods, 10 yards; and of sugar 10 pounds per family, are made annually, while the supply of glass and crystal would be limited to six pieces, for the same number of individuals in a year, and of porcelain and earthenware one piece would have to be divided between six families, and one hat among twenty families. The Emperor has several manufactories of his own for paper, cotton, iron and fire-arms; but none, I believe, except the last named, which

furnishes weapons to the troops, repays the expense of its establishment. Though there are several mills and *zavods* (works) carried on by foreigners in and about St. Petersburg, the great centre of native manufacturing industry is Moscow, and its neighbourhood. Yet so poor are the supplies from all sources within the country, that it has been said, "if Russia is to be compelled to sue for peace by our attempts to narrow her foreign trade, measures ought to be taken to prevent her from importing foreign goods rather than checking the exports of her own products. Besides tallow, to the value of about three millions sterling, the whole quantity of hemp and flax, her principal articles of home growth, will barely suffice to produce one single shirt annually for each of her inhabitants, since Russia's total annual exports of these products do not exceed the amount of two millions and a half sterling, or about 10*d* worth of those articles per head, if consumed in the country itself."*

The mass of the Russian population, indeed,

* See *Economist*.

is clothed at very small expense. Cotton trousers tucked into high boots of half dressed leather, a cotton shirt and a sheepskin coat, or coarse camlet caftan bound round with a sash, constitute the whole outward man of the *moojik*, whose entire equipment may cost about ten roubles (30s), the sheepskin being the most expensive article. Ten shillings would buy a common female costume, which consists of a sarafan or long petticoat held by straps, which pass above the arms, a chemise with sleeves extending nearly to the elbow, a kerchief over the head, a pair of shoes and sometimes stockings, but more frequently strips of cotton or linen cloth wrapped round the leg and foot; for out-of-doors wear, a quilted jacket is added to these, and where circumstances will permit, a *salope* or long cloak in the German fashion. The simplicity of their dress is not a matter of taste with these people, who when they can afford it are strongly addicted to finery, and it is amusing to observe the gradual transformation of the servant women, who on coming into town to their first service wear the village sarafan, but as their wages are paid and increased, assume

the *nemetzhoy mode* (foreign fashion), and indulge extensively in crinoline.

Ekaterinhof is the field favoured by this class for the display of their finery, and no traveller, curious in the manners of Russian townspeople, should omit visiting this place on a gala-day, when the promenade is crowded. The gardens are maintained in good order at the expense of the municipality of St. Petersburg, and possess one great charm for the citizens in the liberty that is there given to smoke in the open air, an indulgence that is not granted anywhere else so near the capital.



F. Harrison

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CHAPTER X.

Military power of Russia—The Guards—The Line—
Peculation of the Superior Officers—Medals—Brutality
of General Arakchëef—The late Tzar's mimic cam-
paigns—Reviews — Summer encampments—Russian
Cadets—The young Georgian—The Tzar's Grandsons
—Chances of promotion—Nicholas and the sledge-
driver—Medical service of the Army—Sir James Wylie
—The Circassian war—The regiment of Kabarda—
Russian ferocity—Desperate encounter with Schamyl
—Use of the Lasso.

THAT the military power of Russia should have become the bugbear of Europe, was no doubt owing to the reputation its armies had acquired for extent of numbers, completeness of equipment, and perfection of discipline, rather than to any renown they had won by great feats of arms. If this were the proper place for a disquisition, it would not be difficult to shew by the whole course of Russian history, that the territorial aggrandizement of that empire has been accomplished by policy and not by

proWess. To wait and watch for the "sickness" and decay of the state whose domains were coveted; and then, by an imposing display of apparently irresistible forces to terrify the victim into submission, has always been the deep, safe game played by Russian conquerors. Such was the course pursued three centuries ago by Ivan Veliky, or the Great, and such the system attempted to be carried out, happily without success in his last venture, by Nicholas, whom his senators once proposed to call *Moodry* or the Wise. With this object in view the late Tzar devoted himself to the improvement of his army, especially of the Guards, whom he kept almost always under his own eye. Their healthy appearance, excellent, and in some cases splendid, uniforms and accoutrements, their presence in all parts of the city, the continual drill and frequent parades they underwent, never failed to impress the mind of a stranger visiting St. Petersburg with the notion that Russia was a great military nation, and the Tzar a chieftain of countless tribes of disciplined soldiers.

Now, as in so many other things observable

in Russia, theatrical effect is an element that enters very largely into displays of this kind, and without pretending to deny that the costly efforts of the late Tzar resulted in the formation of a very numerous and well regulated army, I must avow my conviction that he never did and never could inspire the naturally unwarlike race over whom he reigned with a strong martial spirit, or convert them into a nation of warriors. The aggressive policy of the Russians has been successful often, their aggressive wars seldom, and never without great losses at first; the decisive battles in which they have conquered have been few, while their successful wars of defence have owed more to the inclemency of their climate, the aridity of their desert plains, and the skilful disposition of their fortresses than to personal valour or love of military glory. We have seen in another chapter how hardly the conscription presses upon the peasant, and with what painful reluctance its summons is obeyed, and certainly to judge from the appearance of the privates of the line their condition must be anything but enviable.

By the side of the guardsmen, they look the squalid and haggard victims of neglect and ill treatment. A troop of Cossacks which I once encountered in the interior, instead of the blue coat and trousers and smart cap of the dashing regiments seen in St. Petersburg, wore dresses of various kinds and colours in wretched condition. What amused me about them was to see two of the band playing the violin on horseback, while the whole party joined in vocal chorus to a fine martial tune. Rations and clothes are often withheld from the private soldiers, who are starved to enrich their commanders. The extent to which speculation is carried on by the superior officers, was illustrated by a case made public when I was in St. Petersburg. A general was degraded and his epaulettes publicly torn from his shoulders, because he had starved his men to death for the sake of the money allowed for supplies; when ordered to furnish draughts to augment the army in the Caucasus; he, in order to keep his accounts square, actually dispatched dead men in their coffins as part of the contingent, directing their living companions to bury them on

various points on their route, as if they had died there. Conduct like this may possibly become less odious to some from force of early habit, for I was told by an officer of one of the guard regiments in the capital itself, that he had often been ordered to bury men who had died in the hospitals, during the night, that their death might remain unobserved, and their names be kept upon the muster-roll as long as possible. This, he said, was a common practice, and added that "an officer in the army might retain the feelings of a gentleman and a man of honour, until he reached the grade of colonel, but after that it was next to impossible, the temptation to increase his poor pay being so great and so rarely resisted."

Copious illustrations might be given of the harsh usage to which private soldiers are subjected. I have frequently seen officers strike their men and pull their hair, as though they would tear it out by the roots. Medals, however, gained in a campaign, have this real value for a Russian soldier—that they keep him inviolate from a blow. Once decorated, no man

can strike him with impunity, for the law then protects him.

An extraordinary instance of military despotism, on the one hand, and complete subjection on the other, is related of the tyrannical favourite of Alexander I.; General Arakchëef. That worthy commander had, by the brutality of his conduct, rendered himself perfectly odious to the troops under his orders, and on one occasion, when the Emperor himself was reviewing them, the cry was raised, *Droogoy natchalnik*, "another commander." The General contrived to explain the difficulty to the easy Alexander, who soon after quitted the field, and left Arakchëef in supreme command. There were some 12,000 men present in position, on ground close by a river. The General gave the word to face about toward the stream, then "march;" and marched them right onward until the 12,000 men were nearly up to their chins in water. He then bade them face about once more, and for two mortal hours kept them in that position, while he lectured them on the impropriety of calling his mild sway into question. The habit

of obedience is very deeply planted in these people, or one can hardly conceive why an outrage like this was not bloodily avenged on the spot.

The manœuvres which the Tzar Nicholas was so assiduous in carrying out every summer at Peterhoff, Krasnoy Selo, and elsewhere, cost him on an average the lives of 30 or 40 men each season. The exposure and fatigues of an actual campaign were frequently undergone by the soldiers in these military games, so pleasing to the imperial commander. I was informed by an officer that he and his regiment were kept on a run, with all their equipment on them, for 15 versts, (10 miles,) the Emperor on horseback leading them at a sharp trot. They afterwards had to pass the night up to their knees in a marsh, and so exasperated have they become at times as to insert sand and gravel into their firelocks to discharge into each other's faces. His Majesty had the success of these mimic campaigns much at heart. The generals who were mal-adroit enough to defeat or out-manceuvre him met with his displeasure and were some-

times disgraced. Rudiger and Mouravieff have both suffered in this way.

The reviews in St. Petersburg every May were splendid military spectacles, in which 30,000 men, in all the pomp and glitter of steel, gold lace, and waving plumes, marched to the sound of martial music from 30 bands, in front of the imperial tent, in which sat the Empress and her court, with her *preux chevalier*, the Emperor, his sons, and a brilliant staff, mounting guard near the tent door. Yet, beneath this gorgeous display, lay concealed the canker of corrupt administration. As a matter of prudence, commanding officers usually return to head-quarters a clean bill of health, even when the regimental hospitals are pretty well filled with sick, and in order to maintain the complement of their battalions under the eye of their master, these gentlemen are accustomed to convey the sick soldiers in full uniform to the parade ground, and allowing them to sit on drums or whatever is convenient till the Emperor gallops by, make them fall into the ranks at the needful moment, so that no

gaps or deficiencies may be apparent to the imperial eye.

The regiments of the Guard always encamp in summer time, some at *Novaia Derevny*, on the Finland side of the Neva, some near the *Volkoffsky* cemetery on the Moscow road, and the majority at *Krasno Selo*, near Strelna. In 1848, when the cholera was raging in St. Petersburg and the revolutionary mania in the rest of Europe, camps were formed in the town itself on the ordinary parade grounds. In the course of that gloomy summer, I had frequent occasion to see a young man who was undergoing the probationary discipline of a younker in the regiment of Sappers and Miners, and visited him in his tent, which he shared with a comrade. It was anything but a comfortable residence during the rainy season which then prevailed, although they, as officers and somewhat contrary to the regulations, had boarded their tent round, and endeavoured to exclude the wet from above by tarpaulin, but without much success for the floor remained decidedly sloppy. The external aspect of the camp was orderly in the extreme, the soldiers occupying long tents

that contained twenty or thirty men each, while every officer had a tent to himself, or shared with one comrade. Though my young friends were engaged in study, preparatory to their examination, the officers generally passed their time when not on duty in playing at cards, smoking, and drinking. The active duties of the regiment consisted in the erection of some very extensive earthworks and formidable redoubts, which, being regularly sapped and mined when the Emperor had inspected them, were blown up in His Majesty's presence with great eclat. The Emperor was much pleased with the regiment on this occasion, ordered a silver rouble to be given to each man, and calling the officers around him, he inquired their names,* and paid them a few compliments, saying he always recollected with pleasure that

* Among the subalterns present was a lieutenant, Romanoff, whom Nicholas jocosely asked, if he were "a relation of his." *Nyett Vasha Imperatorsky Veleetchestva!* "No, your Imperial Majesty," was his simple answer, for which his comrades jeered him not a little, as letting slip an opportunity of promotion, which a witty reply might have procured him.

he had served in that regiment himself. This mode of rewarding the troops for good conduct is usual with the Tzars, whose personal influence it extends, and compensates, in some measure, for the miserably low pay of the Russian soldier. A donation of this kind amounts to between 3000 and 4000 roubles (500*l.* and 600*l.*); for a regiment at its full complement contains four battalions of 1000 men each. The battalions, which are commanded by colonels, are divided into *Rotas*, or companies, of which, in time of peace, a certain number, equivalent to a battalion, retire to their homes till called for, reducing the regiment, which is under the command of a general, to about three battalions.

I must remark by the way that an officer is not allowed ever to appear in public without his uniform, nor ever to employ an umbrella, though his ample military cloak suffices to shield him from the weather and to cover any discrepancies in the cut of his coat. Younkers, who wear the great coat of the common soldier, are not allowed to ride in a carriage or on a droschky, a regulation which, however, I know

was constantly evaded in excursions from the camp to town. In this respect, the condition of cadets in the military schools is more comfortable, as they enter the regiment at once as officers, yet the rough two years probation of a young man's life is often preferred to the easier duties of the college, because the time is reckoned as active service in the former case and not in the latter.

The cadets, both naval and military, perform like their seniors the service of a miniature campaign every summer; the former, in three old frigates stationed near Peterhoff; the latter, in a camp situated on a flat plain near the same imperial residence. The cadet camp is arranged in a long parallelogram, the cavalry and artillery at one end, and the long wooden sheds or stabling for the horses at some distance. The tents stand in rows, or streets, planking being laid down for the roadway where the land is soft and marshy. The acquaintance whom I and another friend visited there, held command over a certain number of cadets who lived together in a long canvas tent, the roof supported by poles, around which, at regu-

lar distances the muskets were piled in nice order. The tent was divided into stalls or compartments, each containing a small camp bed and wooden bench, under and about which the cadet had to stow away his instruments, writing case, full dress uniform, and all his moveables. Our 'locale' was a small tent at the upper end of this, with a square aperture cut out of the canvas to enable the occupant to overlook the proceedings in the large one. A bed, two or three chests, a couple of most useful glass tumblers, and the same number of chibouques, constituted the "garnishing." An old soldier, our servant, occupied a still smaller establishment opposite to us, in which he usually reposed on the bare earth, rolled up in a sheepskin. We passed our time very merrily on this 'tapis vert;' I was installed in the bed, "Mattvey," the servant, having improvised one for his master on two of the chests, the third being propped on end between us by way of table.

We awoke to beat of drum, when Mattvey entered with much reverence, bearing in either hand a tumbler of hot *chi*, or tea, which whilst sipping "en couchant," he presented a lighted

chibouque to be inhaled in the same easy position, and carrying out the tumblers, returned with them filled with hot water for shaving. After a bathe in the gulf, into which all the camp appeared to have emptied itself, we strolled about, returning at twelve to breakfast off fish, flesh, caviare, and cucumbers, when the tumblers were again in requisition with French or Rhenish wine. Dinner, by the officers, was taken at four in the mess-tent, to the music of a capital band. A Georgian youth, in a splendid light blue dress, with yellow satin sleeves, decorated with silver lace, and a Persian sheepskin cap,* observing my friend sketch, volunteered to sit. His full oval face, dark eyes and regular features had a melancholy expression, which was accounted for when I heard that he was the son of a Circassian chief-

* I cannot help suspecting that the two officers who fell bravely fighting in the attack upon our trenches before Sebastopol, on the 23rd of March, and who are described by "Our own Correspondent" as Albanians, were Circassians of the provinces which have submitted to the Tzar. Their rich and picturesque costume might induce a belief that they were Albanians.

tain, had been taken prisoner in the Caucasus, and was now receiving an education to fit him for the Russian army. .

The cadets were in the habit of mounting guard and posting sentries with the care and vigilance of an army in the field, liable as they were to a visit from the Emperor at any moment. The late Tzar Nicholas made a toy of this juvenile force; he would manœuvre them before the Empress, and set them at times the most extraordinary feats to perform. On one occasion, I was told, he stationed a number of cadets at the foot of the great Peterhoff cascade when all the waters were playing, and ordered them to climb up to the top of the rock, offering a prize to the boy who should be first in this amphibious race. Not many of the little fellows reached the terrace above, where it was a poor satisfaction to them to shake their drenched clothes in the presence of the Empress and her ladies. At a review of this cadet corps, held by his Majesty at Peterhoff, I was much amused once to see his two grandsons, the present Tzarevitch and his brother, in the front line of infantry. They fixed bayonets and

presented arms when the Emperor rode up, with as good a grace as a young militiaman would on Hampstead Heath, their father riding behind their grandfather, as the head of his staff.

The Russian private soldier is not shut out from all chance of promotion ; by good conduct he may obtain a commission in about twelve years, and even sooner by a signal act of bravery. The late General Scoboleff, commandant of the citadel of St. Petersburg, a man highly and justly in favour with his Imperial master, had been a private in the regiment of Sappers and Miners, and would often point-out, while passing through the barracks as Inspecting General, the wooden cot that he had occupied when a private. Officers in abundance, however, are furnished from among the young men who enter the ranks as *younkers*, as well as from the numerous large military schools, or as they are called, cadet corps. The system pursued in these immense establishments, tends to infuse a martial spirit into that class of society which is willing to furnish officers, however little may have been done towards creating in the peasant

class a passion for military glory. The cadets in their tenderest years are clothed in military uniform, with the double eagle impressed on their metal buttons, a diminutive helmet on their heads, and a small musket and bayonet in their hands. Though a numerous staff of officers and teachers is maintained at considerable expense for the instruction of this juvenile army in various branches of scientific and practical knowledge, the large portion of time devoted to the drill, and the long detention of the youths at the camp in summer, render any great achievements in the intellectual field impossible. The prizes consequent on passing a good examination, no doubt are worth striving for, consisting as they do of commissions in the guards, and bringing with them the notice of the commander-in-chief, most frequently a member of the reigning family, and many a poor gentleman's son has thus had the career of fortune opened to him. Every cadet who passes his examination at all, receives a commission in the army, but being sent to a regiment of the line, that is, from the gay capital to a dull garrison town, or a lonely military

station, is not an enviable lot. It is said that certain cadets who have more money than they have learning or industry, interleave with bank-notes the papers which they give to the Examiners, and thus secure to themselves a mark of "distinguished" success. The moral character of these immense educational establishments, containing, as some of them do, 700 pupils, is not free from stains of even a worse description than venality. Truth-telling and honesty in trifles, is not a distinguishing characteristic of these military youths, too many of whom hold by the same low standard of morality when they get out into the world. To cheat or "bilk," as the term was, a hackney coachman, used to be esteemed a clever and not dishonourable feat in some parts of England, and the following anecdote proves the existence of a similar practice in Russia. One winter's morning the late Emperor Nicholas, having walked across the ice to the cathedral of Peter and Paul, which is inside the citadel, hired on his return, a common hack sledge which brought him to the palace door. The great Autocrat was about to enter the building and order his fare to be

paid, when the Ishvoshtchik, who seems not to have known his passenger from any other officer, insisted on keeping the Tzar's cloak till the money was sent to him, for, said he, "I have been cheated several times by officers who went in at that door and promised to send me the money; but there are many doors to the palace, and I have never seen either money or officer again." His Majesty was much shocked at this statement, but dishonesty is a national failing that passed even his power to correct.

On another point of much interest at the present time, the real state of the Medical service of the army, I am unable to say much, but as far as appearance went, it was efficient and well managed. There are two large military hospitals in St. Petersburg, one containing 2000 beds, the other 1100. Invalids beyond the skill of regimental surgeons, are sent there, if not affected with ophthalmia or cutaneous diseases, for which there are separate hospitals. The wards shewn to visitors look clean and in good order; the bedsteads are of iron painted green, covered with straw mattresses four inches thick, and in some of the wards a softer couch

of horsehair may occasionally be found. Carpeting laid down between the rows of beds gives a great air of comfort to the wards. Another striking feature of these establishments is the service of baths, of which there are hot, cold and vapour; nor can a stranger fail to remark in the lavatories, the endless series of taps from which the water falls for the patients to wash themselves, as they never, if they can avoid it, dip their hands into that fluid, but allow it to run in a stream upon them. In the chapels, which occupy no inconsiderable space in these buildings, service is performed every day.

The smaller of the two Hospitals which is called the "Smolnoi" from its locality, counts forty-five doctors and surgeons on its staff, three of whom are resident. Many of these gentlemen are Germans, most of them foreigners of one nation or another, though among the few natives eminent in science of whom Russia can boast, one is undoubtedly a great surgeon, M. Piragoff. The chief of the whole medical staff of the Empire, till his death, which happened last year, was a Scotchman, Sir James Wylie, many years body-surgeon to the Emperor

Alexander I. The career of this gentleman, whose eccentric bequest of his large fortune to the Emperor Nicholas recently excited so much attention, was very remarkable, and will render the memoirs which he is said to have written, if ever published, very interesting. He went to Russia to seek his fortune in the reign of the Empress Catherine, was not at first so successful as he expected to be, and about to return home in disappointment, when he was invited to enter the service of Prince Galitzin. A lucky operation brought him under the notice of the Imperial family, and he was thenceforward attached to the person of Alexander. He it was who superintended the embalming of the Emperor Paul's corpse, a topic that he could never be induced to dwell upon in conversation, the reason for which may be well imagined. He accompanied Alexander during all his campaigns, visited the Empress Josephine at Malmaison by desire of the Tzar, and was in attendance upon Moreau after the wound which cost that General his life. Sir James always said that Moreau would have lived, if after the amputation of his legs, he had not been dis-

turbed by general officers who came to consult with him on the progress of the conflict. The old doctor witnessed the death of his friend Alexander, who seems never to have taken any medicine from him, was received into the favour of Nicholas, and died only a few months before his Imperial legatee. A nephew of Sir James's, who died a few years ago, was medical attendant to the late Grand Duke Michael, who loved him for certain Falstaff-like qualities that he possessed, being "not only witty himself, but the cause of wit in others."

The long and harassing war, with the mountaineers of the Caucasus, has been so far serviceable to the Russian power, that it has furnished a probationary school for the army, and by its constant demands on the fortitude, intrepidity and vigilance of the soldier, has converted raw levies into well-trained veteran troops. In this respect, Circassia has done for Russia what India and Kaffirland have done for England, and what Algeria is doing for France. A few details concerning those troops, which I had from an officer who knew them well, and had led them into many an action,

may not be unacceptable to my readers. He spoke especially of one regiment that distinguished itself above the rest by its excellent soldierly qualities, whose commander I happened to be slightly acquainted with, and who has since risen to the highest rank in the service. To show the confidence which these men had in themselves, my informant told me, that in traversing one of the wild mountain passes of the Caucasus, he met a detachment of them; and inquiring who they were, was answered by the sergeant, as he stepped forward; "The first soldiers in the world; we belong to the regiment of Kabarda." Their Colonel had, indeed, identified himself with his followers, not only in leading them to many a gallant exploit against the warriors of Schamyl, and in attacks upon their strong *Aouls*, or fortified villages of the Caucasus, but by accompanying them in their laborious marches, himself on foot, and bearing, like a common soldier, the billets of wood, which, in those bleak regions, every man was bound to carry from one encampment to another. I saw this gentleman set out from St. Petersburg, to go to the Caucasus, the Heir-apparent himself

being present at the farewell dinner, given to him by his comrades. He had given up his property to his nearest relative, in consideration of an annual stipend being paid to him, in order that he might be free to carry out a resolution, if not a vow, which he had made, to devote himself to his profession of arms, and to take Schamyl dead or alive. He has since become the first man, or nearly so, in that troubled region of the Tzar's dominions; and being still comparatively a young man, he may be expected to play, under the present Emperor, an important part in the history of his country. To return to my friend's narrations. He himself being on the staff of General Argoutinsky, had formed part of an expedition, sent to recover a strongly fortified mountain post which had fallen into the hands of Schamyl. Their way lay through a difficult country strewed with rocky debris, a foaming torrent on the one side, and steep precipices on the other. As they advanced, huge rocks were hurled down upon their heads by the women, old men, and children of the tribe, stationed on the summit of the precipice. This destructive by-play became so

serious, that the Russian General commanded a halt, and brought his artillery to bear upon the heights, which he, by this means, cleared. Resuming their march, the force came upon a most formidable position of the enemy, who, in considerable number, occupied a kind of natural fortification—a rising ground fenced, as I have said, on either side by mountain and river, and strewed all over with immense fragments of rock, behind which the Circassians took their stand right in the path of the advancing Russians, upon whom they fired down a hail of bullets. There was no time for hesitation, the latter formed at once, and charging gallantly, carried the position at the point of the bayonet.

A circumstance occurred at this spot which, while it shews the ferocity of the Russian soldier, will explain, if not palliate, the practice we have since had so much reason to deplore, namely, that of stabbing the wounded. The statement was made to me in the summer of 1852, before any motives for a war with England had come to light, and therefore long before the letter recently sent to the Danish Minister at St. Petersburg on this very subject,

could have been written. It was a common *ruse* with the Circassian, when his ammunition was nearly exhausted, and he had no time to escape from the advancing enemy, to throw himself on the ground, and, simulating death as naturally as he could, fire upon his foe at any favourable opportunity. On this occasion, a Russian bayonet was thrust into a prostrate body by way of test, and it made the unfortunate victim leap again into life. The officers ordered him to be taken to the rear as a prisoner, but before getting so far he was knocked on the head with a musket, and hurled into the torrent below by the infuriated Russians. Similar traits of the brutality and, at the same time, reckless daring so frequently exhibited by the Russians at Sevastopol, incline me to think that the troops which fought at Inkermann had been trained in the "frosty Caucasus."

But to return to the narrative.

On reaching the place which they were sent to attack, the Muscovites were again obliged to pause and make something like regular ap-

proaches. The houses in these *Aouls*, it must be observed, are all built of stone, with flat roofs, and so constitute, with very little preparation, a series of little citadels, whence the mountain marksmen commit terrible havoc upon an approaching foe. Of the precision of their fire a remarkable proof was given on this occasion. The Russians had hastily raised a breastwork of loose stones before one of these houses, from which the unseen mountaineers were dealing out death with fatal rapidity ; but the stones not lying compactly together, left numerous crevices, through which the rays of the setting sun penetrated from behind the assailants. The besieged did not fail to profit by this little circumstance, for every time that a crevice was darkened they fired at it, and with such effect that in this way several officers and men were wounded in places which they least expected to be touched. A young Count Heyden, son of the admiral already mentioned, received a dangerous wound in the groin from one of these shots. This was not all ; the Russians were beginning to fall with wounds re-

ceived from below, no one knew how, until it was discovered that they were standing on hollow ground; pierced for the service of three or four Circassian sharpshooters stationed in a subterraneous cavern. The entrance to this cavern being discovered, and the stone which blocked it up removed, not without difficulty, the bold fellows within were taken prisoners, though one of them made a daring attempt at escape, by getting through a hole in the cave and rolling himself like a ball down a steep ravine; unfortunately for him, a Russian soldier on the other side of the ravine observed the movement, and rolled down too, with a bayonet in his hand, with which he forced him to surrender. The house above was not taken till after considerable loss, and was then found to contain a very small number of the enemy. The same bloody conflict had been carried on all through the village, which, when he saw that it was untenable, Schamyl finally succeeded in leaving with the greater part of his followers. The Russians, however, loudly expressed their exultation at this victory, and a

Frenchman in St. Petersburg, proprietor of the Circus there, made a rich harvest the ensuing Easter holidays, by a theatrical representation of the capture of the Circassian fortress. It had a run of I know not how many days and nights; and the Court having patronized the exhibition, it was considered loyal to go and fan the patriotic flame by witnessing the mimic display of a Russian victory.

A statement was made not long ago, by one of our newspaper correspondents, that some Russians at Sevastopol had made use of the lasso to capture stray officers and men belonging to the besieging force. Improbable as this story may seem, it is not impossible; for the Russians may well have learned to perform the feat from the Circassians, their schoolmasters in war, who, as I was credibly informed, employ that mode, among others, of catching and killing their enemies. Concealed on some elevated point, near a Russian encampment, the wily mountaineer lurks with the bloodthirsty patience and vigilance of a Thug, till some incautious horseman passing near, unconsciously

offers himself for a prey. In the twinkling of an eye the lasso is round his throat, he is dragged from his horse, and a dagger is in his heart, before he knows who it is that has so treacherously attacked him, or from what quarter the attack is made.

CHAPTER XI.

The Tzar—Power of Nicholas—Sketch of his early life—Visits England—His Marriage—Accession to the Throne—Restores absolutism—Admiration of England—His restless activity—The private bell—Nicholas' art of governing—His unceremonious visits—The Emperor and the Mimic—Anecdote of Nicholas and an officer from the Caucasus—Military mania—The German artist—Death of the Grand Duke Michael—Reply of Schamyl's son to the Emperor—Instance of the Tzar's humanity—His behaviour in the nursery—The Imperial parrot—Last illness of Nicholas—His death.

THE Tzar of Russia, standing at the head of his nation, absolute master in fact, as well as in name, of seventy millions of human beings, offers a grand spectacle in these unheroic days.

He brings back to our minds the personages of ancient history. The Pharaoh, who by a mere word condemned thousands of a tributary people "to make bricks without straw;" the kings of Nineveh and Babylon who razed cities to the ground, and transported their

inhabitants to distant regions, by whose waters they "sat down and wept;" or the Greek and Roman potentates, who by a nod could send legions upon legions of brave warriors to gratify the inordinate lusts of one man's ambition.

A lofty imperial position of this kind the Tzar Nicholas seemed born to fill; his outward man "looked every inch a king," and he bore himself as though he would "bestride this narrow earth like a Colossus." His power was indeed colossal; with one foot on Arch-ángel, and the other on Sevastopol, it cast a dark shadow over all the countries contiguous to Russia, from Sweden to Turkey.

Yet, though he filled a throne with so much becoming dignity, the late Emperor of Russia was not a man of that brilliant genius and vast grasp of intellect with which it has been the fashion of late to invest him. His position was an extraordinary one, that of a despot in the nineteenth century. With all the appliances of science, and the noble products of freedom in other lands, at his command, he was absolute ruler over a fourteenth part of the human race, and master of a seventh por-

in of the globe. A finished European education had been given him, astute and accomplished ministers surrounded him, and a submissive people bowed before him. All he required to become a great sovereign, was a strong will, a single purpose, and a firm hand to hold the reins of power. But his possession of these qualities in however eminent a degree, nevertheless, did not establish his claim to the attributes of genius, to the wide-searching glance, all commanding view and creative mind, which enables the elect few to impress upon the mass of mankind the marks of their own individuality. His own words, at least words attributed to to him by Custine, go far to prove this truth — when he modestly said, “ Happily the machine of government is very simple in my country, for with distances which render every thing difficult, if the form of government were complicated, the head of one man would not suffice for its requirements.”

In his vain attempt to shine as a great military commander, in the splendour of his court, boasting of it as “ *la première cour de l’Europe*,” in his prodigal generosity and even

in his frailties, he offered many points of resemblance to Louis XIV. ; and we all know how indignantly Napoleon I., the most striking modern example of genius on a throne, repudiated the compliment which ventured to compare him with "le Grand Monarque."

At the time of his father's tragical death Nicholas was only about five years old, and his education as well as that of his younger brother and sister, was confided wholly to the care of their excellent mother, the Dowager Empress Marie. Eight governors and one "chef," among whom were Storch the statistician and Adelung the philologist, were appointed to conduct the education of the young prince ; a different governor was on duty each day, by which division of preceptorial labour it was perhaps intended to save the royal pupil from any individual influence, like that which La Harpe had exercised over the mind of the eldest brother.

During the life of the Emperor Alexander, Nicholas, even when arrived at man's estate, was kept in comparative obscurity ; and he appears to have had no opportunity of displaying

his abilities, except in the enforcement, as General, of a rigorous discipline among the Guards, which served to render him very unpopular with that formidable arm of Imperial power. Soon after the general peace, in his nineteenth year, he made the "grand tour;" but appears to have attracted little more than the ordinary notice, accorded to a man of his rank. When in England, the gentleman appointed to attend him was Sir W. Congreve, the inventor of the famous rockets, a companion all the more agreeable, no doubt, to the Grand Duke, from the special interest which, even then, his Highness took in every subject connected with artillery and fortification. It is recorded that, in order to assist him in obtaining a thorough knowledge of the English character, a boxing-match for a purse of 20 guineas was got up at Coombe Warren, whither the Grand Duke "came in a carriage-and-four, accompanied by several noblemen and gentlemen." How far the opinion then formed of English pugnacity influenced his subsequent policy, or how much England may owe to the two rude pugilists, for the respectful conduct ob-

served towards her by the great Tzar Nicholas, it is impossible to say. Although, when he first landed at Deal, a military impulse had prompted his immediate visit to Dover, in search of fortifications, before he left England again he had discovered the real sources of her power, by a general survey of all the manufacturing districts. As he returned home, he was betrothed at Berlin to the lovely daughter of the beautiful and patriotic Queen Louise of Prussia; and the marriage took place in St. Petersburg* on the $\frac{1}{3}$ July, 1817. Following the example of his parents, rather than that of his sovereign brother, Nicholas, while Grand Duke, strictly fulfilled the duties of a retired domestic life. If we may judge by the portraits taken of him at this period, even his personal appearance, which constituted no inconsiderable element of the *préstitige** which subsequently surrounded him,

* An amusing illustration of the influence he sought to derive from his imposing personal appearance, is given in an article in the last Quarterly Review upon the "Emperor Nicholas." An actress tells the Tzar, that his person "a diablement le physique de son emploi," "is devilishly well adapted to his line of characters;" a charge he does not attempt to refute.

was not remarkable. His tall, slender figure, and long thin face, gave little token of the power and energy latent within him. The violent moral concussion, which he underwent on his accession to the throne in the 23th year of his age, seems to have acted with galvanic force upon his mind and body, causing the latter to dilate, while it concentrated and invigorated his mental faculties. The events of that critical period are written in the page of European history.

It would appear from the hesitation then exhibited by Nicholas, that he was not fully aware of his deceased brother's intention with regard to the succession, nor convinced of the sincerity of Constantine's abdication. A striking proof this, of the small degree of confidence accorded by Alexander to his younger brothers.

It would almost seem, that in the succession of her rulers during the nineteenth century, coming, as they severally did, just at the time when most needed, Russia had been under the special protection of Providence.

Paul, whose exaggerated admiration of Napoleon I., like that felt by his father Peter III. for the Great Frederic, had led his people into

a war with the nation from whose hostility his country had most to dread, was succeeded by the liberal-minded *Anglomane*, Alexander I., who once said, that if he were not Emperor of Russia, he would wish to be a farmer on Richmond Hill. The latter, who, by the force of circumstances, rather than by political or military skill, raised his empire to an unexpected pitch of power and grandeur; but who, at the same time, had unconsciously introduced and fostered principles destructive of autocracy, the chief element of Russian power, opportunely gave place to a sovereign—Nicholas—whose whole life was bent upon restoring absolutism to its full vigour. But Nicholas, having succeeded in his object, and having brought a great portion of continental Europe to acknowledge his supremacy, involved himself in a war, which threatened to dislocate his vast empire, and humble its loftiest pretensions, when death removed him from the scene of mortal strife, to make room for a prince, whose liberal education commenced under the superintendence of the first Alexander, and whose enlarged view of matters, politic and social, promise to heal the

wounds of battle, and restore peace to his country, and to Europe. •

The effect upon Nicholas of the revolt of 1825 was to make him hate and abhor constitutionalism. Under the impulse of the shock which he then received, he devoted himself to the duties of government, as though resolved to prove that an enlightened despotism is more suitable to the wants of a large portion of Europe than a mixed government.

The convulsions in 1848 confirmed him in this opinion, though the firm attitude of England during that extraordinary crisis, while it greatly astonished him, excited his profound admiration. Antagonist as he was of political liberalism, his sagacious mind perceived that England was at least as strong and aggressive as himself, and that the day must come when the two powers would cross their swords in a contest for supremacy. Obedient to the traditions of his ancestors, and intent upon the task which they had bequeathed to him, he prepared for encroachments upon his neighbours by strengthening his seaboard, north and south, with vast fleets and fortresses well nigh impregnable.

There can be no doubt that the catastrophe of war which fell so suddenly upon Europe, was unduly precipitated by Mentschikoff's mission to Constantinople, the result very probably of a kind of religious infatuation that had latterly got hold of the Emperor's mind; but that a struggle must come, sooner or later, with the powers of the West, was unmistakeably evident.

There is abundant evidence of the fact that Russia would willingly have delayed the contest. I was much struck with the reply of a Russian gentleman in St. Petersburg, who was in daily attendance upon the Emperor, to a question I put to him, when affairs in Turkey began to look ominous, and there was a rumour of war. "Will it be a war with England or with Turkey?" said I. "With England!" he exclaimed, "oh! no, England is too strong for us to go to war with her." "*Yet,*"—perhaps he mentally added; for a few years previous to this conversation, I heard a Russian of rank coolly assert that "the Russian empire was but a scaffolding, the fabric of her power being only in course of erection, and that she was

waiting to take advantage of the time of transition in Europe." These words were uttered in 1847, at the time of the Tzar's loan (as it was called) to France of 50 million francs, and before the revolutionary outbreak of 1848. At that time Russia, by the manifold ramifications of her efficient diplomatic staff, was so well acquainted with the figures on the European chess-board and their relative positions, that she thought she could play them as she liked for her own advantage, but the rapid evolution of events in France disconcerted her, and a false move made in relation to that country and her remarkable ruler, spoiled the Russian game.

But to return to Nicholas and his personal character. He was essentially the man of action, guided by a spirit of resolution that was seldom "sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;" that is to say, his vision was clear enough when directed towards a single object, while his mental range was not so wide as to disturb the fixity of any resolve he might make to attain such object. The very reverse of Hamlet, who has been said to typify modern

Germany, Nicholas, at the head of Russia, might find a truer representative in Macbeth. He worked incessantly, examining state papers, consulting with his ministers, inspecting public establishments, superintending court ceremonies, holding reviews, and travelling from one end of his vast empire to the other, with an impatient activity that allowed him no rest. He endeavoured to exercise a personal supervision over the whole country, and to facilitate his object, he reduced the entire system of government to one of military uniformity and routine, the strict regulations and etiquette of which he allowed none but himself to break through. His vigilance, however, was often defeated by the cunning of his "amiable" people, as he called them, in his conversation with Custine. I was amused to discover in the porter's lodge of some of the public establishments at St. Petersburg, a private bell-pull, which was used for one purpose only, namely, to announce the sudden arrival of the Emperor or some member of the Imperial family.

The late Tzar exercised his faculty of controlling and influencing other men with some-

thing like artistic care; it was his art of governing. He studied the men who came in contact with him, and operated upon their minds with the skill of a consummate actor, distributing smiles and frowns with admirable discrimination. He knew how to play off his ministers against each other, just as Nesselrode produced a balance of Russian influence in Europe, by setting the Courts of the Continent one against another. Nicholas did not scruple to make instruments of the members of his own family. That he might always shine before the soldiers, like the Sun of magnanimity and generosity, his brother, the Grand Duke Michael, a man of really kind heart and the commander-in-chief, was made to be the representative of unflinching rigour and of sternest discipline. On the other hand, in order to keep those immediately around him on the alert, the Tzar did not hesitate to mortify and humble the high functionaries of State, by sternly noticing trivial errors, omissions of "tithe, anise, and cummin," even when he remained undisturbed by the knowledge that "weightier matters of the law were left undone," and beyond

his power to enforce. An instance of the disagreeable things which he could say and do, was exhibited at a visit which he condescended to pay to one of his wealthiest subjects, allied by marriage to a reigning house in Europe. The gentleman, who in some manner had displeased the Tzar, received his Imperial guest at the door, with a taper in each hand, and walked backwards all the way until he had ushered him into the saloon where the company were assembled, without once receiving a word or a glance of recognition. "Does he think," said Nicholas, to one of his officers, "that I am come to see him? I came to see my cousin, the princess;" and he made his way, without further notice, to the place where his host's wife sat receiving her visitors. Although he had an intense feeling of his own personal dignity and what was due to it, he often overstepped the bounds of etiquette in his conduct towards others; for instance, in the abrupt, unceremonious visits which he paid to crowned heads in Stockholm, Berlin, and Vienna; and again in his frequent, unexpected appearance in assemblies of his own subjects; for, be it understood,

with all this apparent familiarity of behaviour, it was not friendly intercourse that he sought, since his presence always inspired a feeling of restraint, if not of terror. The gracious affability, which he knew well how to assume, was rarely exhibited, except in the privacy of his palace; or, if in public, it was with a special view to produce an effect. He once entered an omnibus, when those vehicles were first started in St. Petersburg; but, though he bade the passengers keep their heads covered before him, every one seemed desirous of escaping from the carriage, and from their proximity to this "Leviathan at play." The conductor wished to take his Majesty to the palace door, but the Emperor's good sense, or his love of order, forbade any such departure from the regular routine.

Nicholas, like other potentates, was often disposed to enjoy a joke at the expense of his friends, a characteristic that was once ludicrously displayed in the apartments of Prince Volkhonsky, High Steward and Minister of his Household. During an interview which Martineff, the comedian and mimic, had suc-

ceeded in obtaining with the Prince, the Emperor walked into the room unexpectedly, yet with a design, as was soon made evident. Telling the actor that he had heard of his talents, and should like to see a specimen of them, he bade him mimic the old minister. This feat was performed with so much gusto that the Emperor laughed immoderately; and then, to the great horror of the poor actor, desired to have himself "taken off." "'Tis physically impossible," pleaded Martineff. "Nonsense," said Nicholas, "I insist on its being done." Finding himself on the horns of a dilemma, the mimic took heart of grace, and, with a promptitude and presence of mind that probably saved him, buttoned his coat over his breast, expanded his chest, threw up his head, and, assuming the Imperial port to the best of his power, strode across the room and back, then, stopping opposite the Minister, he cried, in the exact tone and manner of the Tzar, "Volkhonsky! pay M. Martineff 1000 silver roubles." The Emperor, for a moment, was disconcerted; but, recovering himself with a faint smile, he ordered the money to be paid.

The story was long current among the gossips of St. Petersburg, to whom it afforded infinite amusement.

I will here relate an anecdote, which gives a favourable view of the late Emperor's manner when he was pleased. I give the scene as described to me by the officer who enacted a part in it. This gentleman was the bearer of despatches from the Caucasus, where, after an obstinate conflict, a fort had been re-captured from Schamyl. He had been travelling for twenty-five days without stopping, and at the last station before reaching St. Petersburg was so prostrated by fatigue that he had to be lifted out of one telega into another. The prospect of an interview with the Emperor, however, roused him completely, and though on entering the capital he found that his Majesty was at Tzarsko Celo, which necessitated a further drive of nearly 30 versts, the excitement of arriving at the palace must have imparted considerable animation to the young officer's handsome face. Soiled, unshaven, and ragged as he was, (for the long journey had left such marks upon his outward man

that he was, on his return to town, refused admission into the first class carriages of the railway train), he was ushered immediately into the Imperial Cabinet. Here the Emperor received him, and taking the despatch from his hand, laid it down upon the table unopened; then making the captain sit down, he said, "*Raskajee vso kak builo*," "Tell me everything as it happened." This the officer did with an eloquence peculiar to him, and which the occasion called prominently forth. His Majesty seemed highly pleased with the recital and manner of it. He kissed the narrator on both cheeks, and bade him "go and sleep, for he must need it." As the latter remounted to his telega in order to proceed to the War Minister, who had required the interview to be reported to him, an envelope was put into his hands, addressed to that high functionary. It proved to be the "orders of the day," written in pencil,* by the Emperor's own hand, and was to the following effect: "Intelli-

* The Emperor Nicholas, I have been informed, usually wrote with a pencil, even when signing ukases and other state documents. The important autograph was immediately fixed by the application of some kind of varnish.

gence of the capture of Fort Axtee has been brought by Colonel ———, my Adjutant." In the corner was written, "*Kajetsa shto muladetz,*" "he appears to be a fine fellow." The Minister congratulated the young man upon this somewhat unusual promotion from junior Captain to be Colonel and Adjutant to the Emperor, by which indeed his fortune was made; for since that time he has worthily fulfilled several important missions.

The military mania of the late Tzar was exhibited not only in the manœuvres, parades, and exercises which he continually inflicted on his soldiers, but in a certain attention to the minutiae of costume and appearance that in any other person would have been harmless and amusing. It is said, for instance, that when men were wanted for the Guards, picked soldiers of the line were submitted to his Majesty's inspection, who apportioned them among the several regiments according to their stature, complexion and good looks; so that he had not only the tall and short regiments, or light and dark ones, but also the ugly and the handsome soldiers duly sorted and paraded in distinct

battalions. One of the curiosities of his palace was a room containing the uniforms of every regiment in his army, made for himself to wear, on occasion of special visits to the different barracks. Another object manufactured for Imperial use was a dinner service of Russian porcelain, with the devices and uniforms of every regiment in the army ; and in the private Imperial Cabinet, at Tzarsko Celo, mentioned above, I remember being struck with the bald simplicity of the furniture and decorations, the latter being nothing more than an immense series of papiermaché models of cavalry soldiers.

The Tzar's ideas of the picturesque even were formed on military principles, as the following anecdote will show. An old German artist residing at Tzarsko Celo, told a friend of mine that he had been engaged for some twenty years executing pictures of the interior of the arsenal there, and all its contents. "The Emperor," said he, "at one time often came to look at my work, and the only fault he found with it, was that, in the figure of that old soldier who acts as warder, I had, to relieve

the straight lines of his uniform, depicted two buttons of his coat unfastened, which was against the regulations. He comes more rarely now, but is always very kind, and finds no fault." This was said shortly after the sudden death of the Grand Duke Michael, the Emperor's younger brother, at Warsaw—an occurrence which deeply affected him. "Our old friend is gone," said the Tzar to one of the pensioners at the arsenal, taking hold of his arm and walking along with him; "our brother is gone before his time and out of his turn. Alexander Pavlovitch went first, then Constantine Pavlovitch, and now it was my turn; but it has pleased Providence to take Michael Pavlovitch, who was a true friend to the Russian soldier. I must wait." He had a shorter time to wait than he probably anticipated.

Acts of gracious condescension like this were more frequent towards* the humbler classes, who received them as pure bounty, than to his more aristocratic subjects, who would scan his motives, and perhaps seek to profit by the occasion.

His Majesty is said to have been once rather

disconcerted by the reply of Schamyl's son, who, having been taken prisoner, was being educated in the first cadet corps. Having taken the boy on his knee, the Tzar asked him what he would do, if he were now to be sent back to Circassia. "Fight for my father, and kill the Russians," stoutly returned the youth. Good care was taken that he should not do this, and he was made to enter the Russian service. According to recent reports, the young man has been sent back to his father, in exchange for the Russian ladies of rank, seized by Schamyl in his late foray into the neighbourhood of Tiflis.

Another illustration of the good-nature of the Tzar Nicholas must be given here, since it sprang from a genuine feeling of kindness. By orders of his medical men, he was accustomed to walk out every morning between eight and nine o'clock. I have often met him in the precincts of the Winter Palace, striding along with no other company than two or three English greyhounds. In one of these promenades, it appears one of the dogs had snatched a hunk of black bread from the hands of a

squalid little lad, who was running home with it. The urchin began to cry out lustily, and to call the dog by all the vile names he could remember, to the no small amusement of the Emperor, who had observed the incident. "Why are you calling my dog by such hard names?" said the Tzar. "Oh, the vile rascal," returned the boy, who did not recognize his interlocutor; "he has taken all the bread that my mother was to have had to-day. I had just bought it in that *lavka*," pointing to a dirty shop in a cellar, and shedding tears of vexation. "Where does your mother live? But come along with me, and I will get you some bread." He took the ragged little fellow with him into the palace, where the astonished attendants were directed to supply him with food, to ascertain full particulars of his mother's actual condition, and to report to His Majesty. The poor woman proved to be the widow of a *peesar*, or writer in a public office, in very reduced circumstances, and her heart was rejoiced by the receipt of a pension, such as her husband would have enjoyed for length of services, had he lived to perform them.

The behaviour of a man towards children or other irresponsible agents, is sometimes a key to his character ; and Nicholas, if he could have felt sure that his sixty millions of subjects were really in the state of pupilage to which he would have had them reduced, would probably have relaxed the sternness of his bearing towards them, and allowed himself to indulge in a rough jocularly, and play the grim humourist, like the ancestor of his friend *Fritz*, Frederic the Great. An indication of this disposition may be discovered in the Emperor's manner when in the nursery of his grandchildren, the sons of the present Emperor, who were under the charge of English nurses. I have heard that it was a standing joke with the Autocrat to employ the little English he knew in saying "naughty words" to the children, and to enjoy with malicious zest the remonstrances of the worthy women which this language provoked.

Another slight illustration of the bent of the "iron Tzar's" disposition, is to be seen in the trivial circumstance of his possessing a parrot that imitated his voice exactly. I was

once greatly amused by hearing a lady describe her alarm, while passing on a court day through the private rooms of the palace in order to escape the crowd of courtiers, at finding herself suddenly brought to a stand-still by hearing the angry voice of the Emperor in the apartment she was about to enter. Her pause of perplexity enabled her to discover that the tones proceeded from the parrot, His Majesty being, as she had at first supposed, in the throne-room surrounded by his court.

Many facts no doubt could be collected to shew that this 'demigod,' as he has been called, justified the French proverb, which says, that no man is a hero before his valet-de-chambre. Here is one : it was affirmed in St. Petersburg, with how much truth I cannot say, for valets in such cases are discreet, that the tight bandage round his waist, which the Emperor persevered in when past middle age, for the sake of preserving his fine military figure, occasioned, when unbuckled at night, such a reaction in his physical system that His Majesty often fainted. Recent events must have seriously affected his health. In September, 1853, when

the shadows of these events had already fallen upon him, he was much changed from what he had been a few months before. I saw him then, for the last time, he was in an open calèche with his second son the Grand Duke Constantine; deep furrows marked his face, his cheeks hung down, his eyes were sunk, and the bold and confident bearing of the would-be master of Europe was gone. Severe, indeed, must have been the trial which reduced his haughty spirit, thus to confess as it were before the public eye a weakness of frame that the first illness which ensued might and indeed did render fatal. He appears, however, for the last year of his life, to have thrown himself upon the loyalty and affection of his people almost unreservedly, and as a last resource; and he perhaps never was so much beloved by them as when, baffled and defeated by his antagonists, he lay down to die.

Though the touching spectacle* of the strong man brought low, and taking an affectionate farewell of his tearful family and friends, has excited a kindly feeling among even the

* See Quarterly Review, No. 192.

enemies of the powerful monarch, yet it is impossible not to remark an instance of the strength of his ruling passion, even in that solemn moment. Dr. Mandt, whose veracity no one who has had the pleasure of knowing him will be inclined to doubt, reports as follows:—At ten minutes past three, he asked me, after I had mentioned the name of his father-confessor, “Must I then die?” I answered, “Yes, Sire.” Not a muscle of his face moved, not the least quickening of pulsation. “How,” said he, “can you find the courage thus to doom me to death; to tell me so to my face?” What a truly imperial sense of personal dignity was there in that question, what an indomitable confidence in himself seems to have returned to the dying Tzar, when a subject took the liberty of telling him to his face that he was mortal! Yet the real greatness of the man shone out upon his death bed. He flinched from no suffering, omitted no duty, forgot no friend. The power and welfare of his country seem to have occupied his thoughts to the last, while the occurrences of his eventful reign passed in review through his mind. He

sent special thanks to the regiments of Guards, who had been faithful to him during the convulsion which marked his accession to the throne; he remembered the words of his father-in-law, the late King of Prussia, and requested that his brother-in-law *Fritz* should be reminded again and again of those promises of fidelity to Russia.* From the number of persons he saw and conversed with, there can be no doubt that he disburdened his mind of all state secrets. He told the Empress she ought to remain on earth in order to be "the centre of the family," as his own mother had been in regard to himself and brothers. To his son and heir, he doubtless confided the whole scheme of his policy, and his view of its prospects of success, and instructed him how to retreat and when to advance. His interview with the father-confessor may have been not the least interesting of these solemn "last

* It now begins to appear, that when Frederic William III. gave his daughter to the young Grand Duke Nicholas, in 1817, a sort of compact was made with Alexander for the exclusion of Constantine from the throne and the succession of Nicholas.

words;" though the pride that made itself apparent in his conversation with the medical man, may have borne him unhumiliated through this exacting rite of his religion. What were the unspoken thoughts and silent souvenirs of the hour of dissolution, no one on earth can tell. Times of previous escape from death must vividly have recurred to his mind—the conflict with his rebel troops in December, 1825—the storm in the Black Sea, on his return from Varna, in 1829—the quelling of the fury of the populace, at the time of the cholera in 1831—the conspiracy in 1848—and an attempt upon his life, which is said to have been made in the Winter Palace itself.*

* The story here referred to, which I heard in St. Petersburg, is to the effect that a certain senator, suffering from some real or imaginary wrong, resolved to stab the Emperor in his bed; but that, by means of a woman, this design was made known to the Tzar. A senator, by reason of his rank, can demand access to the Sovereign at any hour of the day or night, with a plea of urgent business. Precautions being taken, the would-be avenger was admitted to the palace in the dead of the night, and hastened towards the Emperor's chamber; passing by the first sentinel, he came upon the Grand Duke Michael

His death, though strangely enough predicted on physiological grounds by Dr. Granville, came upon Europe like a thunder-clap, announcing to many of its inhabitants a dispersion of the heavy clouds that oppressed the nations, while to a small number of them it presaged a great diminution of apparent strength and influence. It was, as the Chinese say, when speaking of the death of any of their Emperors, "The crash of a falling mountain,"* the reverberations of which resounded from one end of the world to the other.

stationed as sentinel in the private corridor, who allowed him to proceed; at the chamber door stood the Grand Duke Alexander, also disguised as a sentinel, who suffered him to enter the room. The assassin went straight up to the bed, and plunged a dagger into the figure lying there; the Emperor stepped from behind a curtain: the figure in the bed had been of wax. The senator was immediately secured with as little *eclat* as possible, and put into confinement as a maniac.

* The Chinese have different words for death, according to the rank of the individual: *SZE* is the ordinary term; *HUNG* for a nobleman or prince; *PANG* for the Emperor, which signifies, "to rush down as a falling mountain."—*Huc's Chinese Empire*.

He left a name that will demand the respect of Russians to a late posterity, both for what he projected, and what he accomplished towards the aggrandisement of the empire; while even the grand mistake which he committed, in exciting the present war, may produce happy results for his country, if the nation thereby learns its proper place in the world, and the bounds which it cannot safely pass. The most valuable legacy he bequeathed to his people were the penitent words, pregnant with instruction for his successors, which were among the latest that he breathed: "If the condition of all my subjects has not been improved as much as I could wish, it is because it was not in my power to do more." This confession carries with it a decisive condemnation of the form of government called "absolute," a system in which Nicholas had placed entire confidence for the regeneration of his country, and it should teach all succeeding Tzars, who have the welfare of their subjects at heart, to modify their despotism, and unite their people with them in seeking to benefit the fatherland.

Ten years have barely elapsed since this

great Potentate was the welcomed and highly honoured guest of England, who applauded to the skies his munificent liberality, his justice, his love of peace and order, and was confident that in him she had secured a friend, whom no untoward circumstance could possibly detach from her. But, like another Cæsar, misled by his ambition, Nicholas crossed his Rubicon (the Pruth), and encountered a more formidable confederacy than was ever dreamed of by his prototype. In that month, the Ides of which proved so fatal to the ancient conqueror, the Emperor of the north, who grasped at the dominion of two continents, breathed his last sigh, and the generous feeling of England on the fall of an enemy, who had once been a friend, would not be ill expressed by the language of the Roman patriot: "As Cæsar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him; but as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortunes; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition."

CHAPTER XII.

Alexander II.—His character—Anecdote of the fabulist Kriloff—Alexander's position during the military revolt—His education—His companions—Arsenieff his preceptor—Pension of tutors—Alexander's visit to England—His marriage—Character of the present Empress—Banquet at Orenburg—Alexander's excursion in the Caucasus—His personal appearance—Paternal affection—Sketch of the Imperial family.

OF the sovereign who has just mounted the throne of all the Russias, Alexander Nicolaevitch, very little is yet known beyond the precincts of his own capital, and even there the reserve entailed upon him, by the necessities of his position, has hitherto prevented the general public from arriving at any just appreciation of his character.

From the little that I heard concerning this Prince during my residence in St. Petersburg, I gathered, that the *role of bon vivant* was partly assumed by him from a prudent regard to the

jealous fear of Nicholas, who would rather have seen his son engaged in the frivolities of the day than have brooked a partner near his throne.

The manner of Alexander, as Heir-apparent, when with his father at reviews and on other public occasions, expressed, as far as my observation went at least, quite as much the fear of a subject as the love of a son. It may be however that the Prince, when he became master of his own household, was not sorry to make amends for the simple regimen to which he was restricted when under the charge of tutors and governors. In illustration of this simplicity of living, an anecdote is told of the disappointment experienced by the Fabulist Kriloff, a famous gourmand, who was at that period invited to dine with the Tzarevitch. In anticipation of a glorious feast, the Russian Lafontaine observed a rigid fast that day, that he might be able to appreciate more intensely the good things that would be set before him; and he resolved further not to indulge largely in the first courses, but reserve himself for the more refined dishes, which would doubtless

close the banquet. Punctual to the hour appointed, half-past three, the company assembled and sat down to table, the Grand Duke, his tutors and Kriloff. Soup was first served, of which the guest partook *comme de règle*, though it was nothing very extraordinary in quality; but of the plain beef, the sly gourmand ate so sparingly that his host, not penetrating the motive of such abstemiousness, pressed him to partake a second time. But His Highness pressed in vain, for the wily diner-out awaited better things; on the tenter-hooks of expectation he continued conversing his best, when, to his horror and dismay, the Grand Duke rose from table, and the visitor discovered that the repast was at an end. The poor Fabulist went home half-famished, vowing never to be taken in again by the prospect of a dinner at the palace.

Alexander was in his eighth year when his father came to the throne, and at that tender age bore a part in an incident which might teach him that a monarch's path is not all strewed with roses. In the military revolt, which threatened to deprive Nicholas of the

crowns he had but just assumed, the child Alexander was confided by his father to a regiment of infantry of the Guards, with a solemn injunction that, whatever happened, they should defend him to the last. They accepted the charge, and as they handed the young Prince through the ranks, vowed to shed the last drop of their blood in his defence. The rough kindness of these bearded men, who could not be induced to give up the boy till the Emperor himself had told them that the crisis was over, must have made a deep impression on Alexander's mind.

His education had been begun under the partial superintendence of his unclé Alexander I., whose character is thought to have strongly impressed, and in some measure to be repeated in, his own. Visitors to the park of Tzarsko Celo may still see the handsome telegraph tower and mimic ruin, which, with its surrounding apparatus for gymnastical exercises, was erected by Alexander I. for the use of his nephew.

Nicholas himself, however, paid great attention to the practical education of his children.

In the largest lake of the park at Tzarsko Celo is a small island, on which the Grand Duke, with the assistance of other boys, built a house and laid out a garden; thither he was accustomed to row his sisters in a boat, and regale them with the produce of his own garden. The youths thus placed in companionship with the young Prince were carefully selected from among the sons of the nobility. Several of them, profiting by this brilliant opening of their career, have since distinguished themselves by their prowess, and obtained rapid promotion, and they will no doubt ere long be invited to the counsels of the young Emperor, or be entrusted with the execution of some of his enterprises.

In measuring the extent of Russian military power, now that death has removed the Sovereign whose iron will compacted (so to speak) and invigorated his forces, we shall do well to remember that the present reign has a compensation for that stern and dreaded will, in the mutual confidence which exists between the Tzar and a faithful band of friends of his own age, trained like himself in all the know-

ledge of the time; enthusiastic, proud, and ambitious for themselves and for their country. The object of the Tzar Nicholas, in appointing these companions for his son, and in choosing them from the best Russian families was, no doubt, to make the heir to the throne as national as possible. Indeed the *nationalism*, for patriotism is hardly the right word, of some of these gentlemen, whom I chanced to know, was as fanatical as the creed of the most rabid American Know-nothings.

The intention of the late Emperor was further manifested, in the appointment of an eminent Russian, the poet Joukoffsky, to the post of Governor to the Tzarevitch, while as many Russians as possible were employed about the Prince in the capacity of instructors. They all found him to possess a docile and kindly temper, a pleasant wit, with a disposition inclining rather to indolence than to exertion. M. Arsenieff, who was his preceptor in "economics," shewed me an instance of the Prince's attention to his teachers, which, slight as it was, expressed a feeling of personal regard, and speaks well for the natural disposition of

the Imperial pupil; it was a present of the Grand Duke's engraved portrait, inscribed with his autograph. Lest the reader should think this little compliment was a cheap way of settling accounts with an old servant, I must add, that all the teachers employed in the instruction of members of the Imperial family continue to receive the stipend paid to them for that instruction, as a pension, up to the day of their death. The lowest sum thus paid out of the Imperial treasury is 1000 roubles (nearly £50) per annum for each pupil; so that where the same master has been appointed to three or four of the Tzar's children, his few years' easy labour is well recompensed, since his employment in the palace makes him, as a matter of course, the fashionable and highly paid master among the courtiers, and generally enables him to secure one or two lucrative places in the educational establishments of the crown. I know a gentleman who at the present time is in the enjoyment of nearly 10,000 roubles annual pension, obtained in this manner, besides his gains from private teaching. He, too, was

accustomed to dwell with an air of gratified pride upon marks of Grand Ducal favour and affection. "At one of the Easter levees," he told me, "which the Heir-Apparent began to hold after he came of age, I was standing low down in the circle, when His Highness entered the audience-chamber. As soon as he perceived me, he hastened across the room, passing by Generals and dignified officials to come and shake me heartily by the hand, and kissing me on both cheeks, said how glad he was to see an old friend there, and how pleased he should always be to welcome me." Making every deduction for the vanity of the narrator, and the habitual practice by the Prince of the *suaviter in modo*, anecdotes of this kind prove that good nature is an ingredient in the new Tzar's character.

On the attainment of his majority in 1839, the Tzarevitch went forth on his travels through Europe, with the double object of extending the range of his knowledge and of making choice of a wife.

At the Court of our Virgin Queen he at-

tracted considerable attention; and among the "vulgar errors" of the day was one which named him as a suitor for the hand of Her Majesty. Strange as the possibility of such a union may seem, if the supposition had been well founded, it would not have been the first time that a Russian Prince had made a matrimonial offer to a British Queen.*

The Grand Duke entered eagerly into the enjoyment of British sports, and, by a liberal gift, founded the Tzarevitch Stakes at Newmarket. The Derby day at Epsom that year, at which the Imperial visitor was also present, is remembered by many, owing to the circumstance of the course being covered with snow at the time of the race; which caused the wits of the turf to make many smart comments on the obsequiousness of the Russian climate, in following the Grand Duke on his travels. The

* Ivan IV., or, as he was too justly called, "the Terrible," sent an embassy to Queen Elizabeth, demanding her hand in marriage. The Belphœbe of Faery Land politely declined the honour, but offered to send an English lady of rank in her stead, and a Lady Hastings was actually named for the unenviable distinction.

liberality of His Highness was unstinted; in one day he is said to have distributed £20,000 among the public charities of London. To the Wellington Testimonial he contributed £300; and after inspecting the House of Correction in Tothill Fields, where debtors under £5 were confined, he asked for a list of their liabilities, and immediately discharged them all. Without imputing improper motives to the dispensation of these munificent largesses, it is impossible not to admire the politic skill of the Tzar's government in thus popularising itself in England, when the soreness of feeling caused by the affair of "the Vixen" was scarcely healed, and when the Eastern Question was about to undergo an important phase in its complicated developement. So successful a pacificator did the Tzarevitch prove, whatever were the means he employed, that, at a public dinner given in his honour by the Russia Company, our Prime Minister, Lord Melbourne, and the Russian Ambassador, Pozzo di Borgo, made speeches indicative of the most cordial amity existing between the two nations.

On visiting Oxford the Grand Duke and his

cousin, Prince William Henry of Holland, received the honorary degree of D.C.L., together with Joukoffsky and Count Orloff. Inspections of the household troops, balls, banquets, and festivities of various kinds, were set before the two Princes, as part of our national entertainment. A *bon mot* of the late Duke of Sussex, delivered on one of these occasions, will, perhaps, bear repetition in this place. Going to a splendid banquet, given at Apsley House in honour of the Grand Duke Alexander, His Royal Highness of Sussex was met as he descended from his carriage by the Duke of Wellington, who, standing at the door to receive his royal guest, was greeted by the words, "Well, *my grand Duke*, how do you do?" The compliment was great, and exceedingly well-timed.

In his subsequent progress through Germany, where one object of his journey was well understood, he appears to have been as thoroughly "set at" by the mammas and young ladies of the various courts of the confederation, as the great Marquis of Farintosh is said to have been in the lordly assemblies of

Great Britain. His good fortune, or his good sense, or both united, led him to fix his regards upon one who was least disposed to force herself into notice.

The Princess of Hesse Darmstadt, it is said, had nearly escaped an introduction to the Prince, till he himself requested to be presented to her, and speedily discovering her to be as superior in intelligence and grace as she was in modesty, became a successful wooer.

She was publicly received in St. Petersburg with great ceremony, and after a year of betrothal employed in acquiring the Russian language and in conforming herself to the Russo-Greek church, as required by the law of the empire of which she is now mistress, was married to the Grand Duke, on the 28th of April, 1841. By the exercise of a sound judgment and high toned character, she has succeeded in maintaining a powerful influence in the mind of her Imperial Consort up to the present time. There was a want of moral refinement in the Court to which she was thus introduced, that made her resort, in pure self-defence, to a cold reserve of manner, and the proud ladies

who surrounded her, accused her of haughtiness. She could not but perceive that a cold, haughty bearing was the surest way of bringing the mass of the Russian nobility to her feet, and she behaved accordingly. Her dislike to ceremoniousness was also displeasing to the boyars and their ladies. A trifling instance of this characteristic came under my own observation. A lady of rank, being about to give a grand ball, at which she was desirous of receiving the Grand Duke and Grand Duchess, requested to know when the Imperial pair would honour her house with their presence. Some days passed before an answer was vouchsafed, which when it did come, consisted of a few lines in pencil, addressed to one of the ladies in waiting, to this effect, "Tell Marie Ivanovna that the ball may take place on the 21st."

To return to the Grand Duke. Before his marriage he made an extensive tour through his father's dominions, and had an opportunity of observing the difference that exists between the customs of eastern and western Europe. At Orenburg, where he received the homage of two Sultans of the Bashkirs, he was treated

with a banquet, consisting of the prime joints of 50 horses, served on 600 dishes, with abundance of Kumiss to wash down the delicate viands. Races succeeded the feast; the first being run by 25 horses, the second by 45, the third by 105, and the last by ten camels. The proceedings closed by the Shumane or Priest, shewing his pseudo-supernatural prowess by taking live serpents between his teeth.

The cross of St. George worn by Alexander, a decoration which is only given for some brilliant feat of arms, was gained by the Grand Duke a few years ago, during an excursion in the Caucasus, when, as Prince Vorontzoff in his report on the subject wrote, "the fiery ardour of the Prince urged him to dash forward in pursuit of a troop of Circassians, who had ventured to appear in sight of the Imperial cortège, and who fled at the approach of his Imperial Highness." Whether the troop of horsemen were introduced upon the scene, as the populous villages of lath and plaster had been to the eyes of Catherine II. in the Crimea, or the roast pig in every cottage to the observation of Alexander I., I will not undertake to say.

In person the present Emperor looks more of a Russian than the late Tzar, whose fair complexion and fine physiognomy bore distinct traces of his German descent. He is very tall and robust, of a dark complexion, with full round eyes, which though occasionally lighted up by the spirit of merriment, habitually wear an expression of melancholy. The last time I had a close view of Alexander, then Grand Duke, he was waiting for a railway train at the station at Tzarsko Celo; he walked about the public waiting room, in familiar conversation with an aide-de-camp, causing apparently as little restraint to the surrounding public, as he seemed to feel himself in their presence. He looked the very picture of *bonhomie*, but appearances are often deceitful, and it was impossible not to remember his close relationship to the first Alexander, whom a great master in the knowledge of human character designated "a Greek of the lower Empire." I never heard, however, anything but a favourable opinion of the present Tzar's excellent qualities as an affectionate husband and father. An amusing instance of the unaffected way

in which he thought of his children, was told me by a young lady, who had charge of a stall at a fancy fair. The Naslédnik (Heir-Apparent) came to ask her for the largest doll she had in her stock, and having secured it, he strode away with it in his arms, seemingly as pleased as such a present might have made him on his second or third birthday. His paternal feelings received a cruel shock shortly after the occurrence of this little incident, by the death of his only daughter ; his remaining four children are all sons.

Of the three brothers of Alexander II., the Grand Duke Constantine takes the most prominent part in public affairs. He was educated for the Navy, served as a Cadet on board ship, even performed a voyage round the world in company with his governor, Admiral Lütke, and seemed to identify himself with the maritime power of the Empire. What his febrile energy of character might have done with a better instrument under his command as Lord High Admiral, it is hard to say, but the experience of the last campaign has proved that he had no confidence in his boasted

Baltic and Black Sea fleets. His restless inquisitive mind must have been deeply impressed on his visit to England, in June 1847, with the wonders of our naval arsenals and dockyards, which he perused, so to speak, in their minutest details and with the most profound attention. He is the Emperor's junior by some years, having been born in September 1827, nearly two years subsequent to his father's accession to the throne; a circumstance which, according to Petersburg gossip, gave rise in their young days to a dispute between the brothers, Constantine asserting that *he* was the eldest son of the Emperor, since at Alexander's birth, Nicholas had only been Grand Duke. The puerility of the distinction insisted on, seems to prove that it was but a boyish cavilling, and yet the rumours of a disputed succession, that were so rife two months ago, had probably no better foundation than this anecdote. In person, Constantine is spare, and, compared with his brothers, diminutive; his features are regular, but stamped with an expression of premature care, quite painful to see; his manners and speech are as bluff as

any sailor's need be, and to judge from the lines of his countenance, I would not venture to say that his temper was of the sweetest. It is difficult to pronounce an opinion on the talents of a Prince who is surrounded by a band of followers devoted to his praise, and rejoicing in the countenance he gives to them as the "Old Russian party," but as yet Constantine Nicolaevitch, though much lauded by his friends, has given no public proof of great abilities. It has been insinuated that he rules the Empire, over which his brother nominally reigns. Such statements, however, like those which affirm the existence of powerful and opposing parties in Russia, must be received with great caution. As long as the Tzar in the absoluteness of his authority can by a word consign his nearest relative like any other subject to a dungeon, or send him into exile, or appoint him to a distant and sterile command, and of such family discipline there are precedents abundant in the history of Russian sovereigns, so long will it be impossible for any Russian liegeman to exercise aught but a delegated authority, or to foster a party that would

have more than a semblance of influence, or indeed of existence. The Grand Duke was always reputed to be afflicted with Anglo-phobia, a disease, the virulence of which his cordial reception in England did not diminish, and which recent events must have greatly envenomed.

The Tzar's younger brothers, Nicholas and Michael, were just entering upon manhood when I left the country, and had been appointed by their father to high posts in the military service. Both of them, tall and handsome young men, neither had then given signs of extraordinary capacity. Nicholas, the elder of the two, was thought to possess his father's taste for military display; while Michael was spoken of as studious and devoted to the gentler arts of peace, though his position as chief of the artillery demanded the exercise of rougher qualities.

One of the most influential members of the Imperial family at the time I speak of, was the Grand Duchess Marie, eldest daughter of the late Emperor, and widow of the Duke of Leuchtenberg. Endowed with great personal

charms and considerable mental powers, this lady has exercised a potent sway over the minds of her brothers and their families, while Tzar Nicholas himself is supposed not to have been insensible to an influence which she brought to bear upon him with the tact of an accomplished politician. Though not a favourite with the few fastidious ladies of the Russian nobility, she has a numerous circle of admirers among their lords, whom she employs without scruple to serve her purposes and further her plans. She has a large family of sons and daughters, who, by a decree of the late Emperor, issued after the death of the Duke of Leuchtenberg, are commanded henceforth to bear the name of Romanoffsky.

Another lady member of this family, who formerly possessed great influence at Court, is the Grand Duchess Helen, widow of the late Grand Duke Michael, the youngest of Paul's sons. Gifted with beauty, wit, and discernment, she is said to have rendered no mean service to the Russian Crown, by important political missions in Germany, carried on under the guise of visits to the German Spas, professedly in search of

means for renovating her health. She has always been a generous patroness to literature and the fine arts, and has introduced into Russia many men of talent, whom she has generally led on to fortune.

This slight sketch of the Imperial family of Russia would be incomplete without mentioning the Prince and Princess of Oldenburg, cousins to the present Emperor, whose amiable character and unobtrusive manner of life justly entitle them to the respect of all who hear their names. While the Prince has devoted himself to the founding and fostering several large and most useful establishments for the education of youth, with a special view to the civil service of the state, the Princess, on her side, has been as active in promoting charitable institutions for the relief of the destitute, the raising the wretched, and for calling back the sinner from his ways. The voice is now silent that could have spoken most distinctly to the truth of these statements; calm and unassuming as that voice was, it was never raised in vain when it brought to the ears of the Prince and Princess of Oldenburg the

cause of the poor and miserable. I allude to the late Mrs. Biller, the efficient instrument of princely charities, and the devoted friend of outcast women and children in St. Petersburg.

CHAPTER XIII.

Moral Influence of the Russian Government—Author's reasons for leaving Russia—Effects of the Porte's Declaration of War—Remarks on the present Crisis—The Principle of "non-intervention"—Mr. Layard's observations on the war—Necessity of extraordinary exertions—Sacrifices made by Russian subjects—Conclusion.

I TOOK a final leave of Russia in the autumn of 1853, being compelled by sanitary reasons to seek a milder climate for my family. There was a moral insalubrity likewise in the country, to which I would not willingly have exposed my young children much longer—a moral lethargy that I had felt creeping on myself every year of my stay in Russia, and which seemed to arise from the consciousness of all thoughts and speech, being "cabined, cribbed, confined," by some invisible, but controlling power. Not that I was ever interfered with by the authorities, nor my liberty of movement checked, further than by the troublesome and inquisitive passport system. Every time that

I went to Count Orloff's office for permission to travel, or permission to live in the town again, the official there took occasion to remind me by some casual observation, uttered in the politest manner, that he knew all about my movements; what relatives I had in Russia; where they were, and what they were doing; and, by adroit questioning, that I could not well avoid answering, he mentally sketched out for himself a tolerably accurate map of my past and proposed movements.

This simple circumstance, however, though it occasioned me no actual inconvenience, so impressed my mind with the necessity of being careful in all that I said and did, that I found myself by degrees avoiding all topics of general interest from the fear of committing myself. The reader can easily imagine the stultifying effects of such a state of mind, and what a longing for my native country arose within me. I found that it was absolutely necessary either to return to England, and escape the insidious torpor, or force myself at once to look at everything from a Russian point of view, and become a true and loyal subject of the

Autocrat. Happily, I chose the better part ; and believe that I should have done so had the sacrifice demanded of me been greater than the one I had to make. I know several most respectable men who have become subjects of the Tzar, as far as their own act can make them so, but I never fancied they were happy in the condition they had adopted ; and certainly some of the most cordial abuse of England and the English that I ever heard has proceeded from the mouth of one of these pseudo-Russians.

The note of war had not yet sounded fully out, when on the 3rd of October, 1853, we took our places on board the London steamer lying at Cronstadt. It was, however, nearer than the Russians seemed generally to expect. The amended Vienna note had been rejected by the Emperor Nicholas, but the prevailing opinion seemed to be that Turkey had too lively a remembrance of the disasters of 1829, not to yield to Russia's threatening demonstrations and avoid war. The Porte's declaration of war, therefore, which reached St. Petersburg on the 15th of October, naturally exasperated

the Tzar and his subjects against the western powers, who supported the Turk in his bold resistance to the Muscovite. I was happily, not there to witness, and perhaps incur in a slight measure in my own person, the explosion of indignation against the English which then took place. According to the letters, however, which I have continued to receive from St. Petersburg and Moscow, the persons and property of British subjects there have been as religiously respected as are those of Russian subjects now resident in England. It is my belief that the majority of Englishmen residing in Russia, suffering though they are and that severely from the present war, in a commercial point of view, yet believe it to be a just and necessary war, and that it could terminate but in one way; namely, victory on our side, if the Allies were seriously and sincerely to make the effort to conquer. The Russians, however, feel already that they have proved their superiority, in protracting the contest to the present time; their dread of British power and pugnacity is gone, and they have learnt that stone walls are stronger than John Bull, a truth

never credited before. Of this, we may all be fully assured, that arms having been once taken up, they will not be laid permanently down again, till Russia is either very greatly humbled, or her invincibility, and consequently supremacy, fully established. Were the war really conducted in the old hard-working, painstaking, prompt and resolute spirit of Englishmen, there could be no fear for the result. No Muscovite contrivances of bastions, counter-scarps and sunken ships will resist the onslaught of the British lion, when his spirit is thoroughly roused. Time it is that he should rouse himself, or like the *Noir Faincant* in Sherwood forest, he may find himself beset by fearful odds. The arm of every Englishman should be nerved to this contest, by remembering that the blow which shall cure the Russian monarchy of its military pride and arrogance will confer vast benefits on the Russian people, no small portion of the human race. Let the Autocrat learn by humbling experience, that he is in error to suppose that "Russia has a mission to proselytize the world," that "the Russian people are selected by God to be the rulers of Europe,"—let

him be disabused of this false and mischievous idea, and his subjects will then perhaps begin to enjoy the benefits of modern civilization. When a million of men are no longer abstracted from the industrial and productive energy of the empire, to be sacrificed to the Moloch of ambitious war, the reapers of the cornfield of Europe, for such might the plains of central Russia become, will "go on their way rejoicing, carrying their sheaves with them." If we would not have a second Caliphate founded in Europe, more terrible than the first, because more powerful, more sweeping and more selfish, we must make a great effort to reverse as much as possible the dictum left by Peter the First to his successors: "I found Russia a rivulet, I made it a river; and bequeath to my heirs the duty of converting it into an ocean." We must stem the torrent of this new Mahometanism, which raises the war-cry of "God is God, and the Tzar is his vicegerent."

It is idle to talk of the principle of "non-intervention," as if nations, any more than individuals, could sit still while their neighbours are pulling their houses down upon one another.

The Millenium is not come yet, and no nation can expect to sit down for half a century together to the enjoyment of luxurious repose. Even if we could be spared for so long a period the sore wounds and evils inflicted by war, it becomes a serious question whether in our present mundane condition, the loss to the nation would not be greater than the gain. Have the last forty prosperous years, productive as they have been of wealth to the country at large, brought any large accession of happiness to the individual homes of which the nation is made up? What has the developement of manufactures and the progress of education done for the national spirit, when we find ourselves in this month of April, in the year of grace 1855, nearly in a state of political collapse,—the English people powerless to help themselves, and the men to whom they have for a time confided the destinies of the country unequal to the effort required of them?

“Egotism is the cancer of which England is dying,” said a profound observer of the pathology of nations, the historian Niebuhr; whose opinion too of the political economy of

the Manchester school (the nucleus be it remembered of the present violent peace party) was that it was *eine schaale weisheit*, "but a shallow wisdom," inasmuch as it restricted its interest in the welfare of the million to an interest in their physical welfare. The same opinion was once propounded to me by a gentleman I met in Russia; who, like many other men, being much struck by the attitude which England steadily maintained during the troublous year 1848, had said to me, "Yours is a great country, her power and freedom, being the growth of centuries, have acquired a solidity that nothing seems able to shake, but," he added, "in the Manchester party, devoted almost solely to the worldly and *material* prosperity of the people, you have a canker eating at the core of your national greatness."

The reality and magnitude of the evil here spoken of is beginning to be felt and struggled against. Quite recently, Mr. Layard, who seems to be the man specially raised for the present crisis, uttered the following pertinent observations before an audience

selected from the most mercantile community in England: "It is very easy to appeal to the sympathies and the pocket; but although I am speaking before gentlemen who have sympathies and who have pockets, I believe at the same time that I am addressing gentlemen who have a deep sense of national honour and national responsibility; I believe that a nation which buries everything in its mere worldly prosperity, that looks merely to its commerce, is very much like a man who has worldly transactions, and who says, 'It signifies little whether I have any principle or religion, so long as I effect my sales or my shop pays me.'" The loud applause with which these sentiments were received by a commercial assembly, goes far to prove that the professional merchant is far from being a mercenary politician, or one deficient in a generous interest for the dignity and glory of his country. Such a generous and self-denying interest is sorely needed by us at the present moment, when the exigencies of the contest upon which we have entered demand great personal sacrifices from all.

The issue of that contest is still hidden in the obscure future. "The chaos, confusion, and the certainty of an European war," which the Emperor Nicholas predicted as about to ensue from the approaching fall of Turkey, has not come actually to pass, because Turkey has survived the aggressor himself, and risen to greater strength than she enjoyed for centuries before. But the effectual rolling back of the tide of Russian power, is a work to be achieved, and a work which demands from the Allied Powers very extraordinary exertions. To force concessions and command respect from the Russian nation, a daring and fearless mode of warfare is necessary. The astonishment excited in the minds of the Russians by the British advance up the heights of Alma, was in itself a reinforcement to our troops that would have been invaluable if it had been made use of immediately; but Balaklava and Inkermann, though glorious to our arms, proved that the Muscovite courage had returned, and the moral influence of an heroic combat was lost to us.

Still, I confess that I am surprised at the Tzar's continuance of the war, and puzzled to

know upon what resources he places his reliance for withstanding a really earnest attack of the English and French forces, which must surely take place before the conclusion of this next campaign. The great London journal has well described the sacrifices which his subjects have to make, or rather the outrages which they are forced to endure. "A nation," it says, "the upper classes of which, at any rate, are among the most luxurious people in the world, is suddenly called upon to exist without imports: the currency is debased by an unlimited issue of inconvertible paper; and large subscriptions in aid of a failing revenue are gratefully accepted, or it would perhaps be more just to say, rigorously exacted. Conscription follows conscription with merciless severity; fathers are torn from their children, and husbands from their wives, to be swallowed up by the devouring exigencies of war, and to meet no more on this side the grave."

True, we English have to bear our share of similar trials and sufferings, but when the strength of the respective antagonists is fairly measured, there ought not to be a doubt or a

moment's hesitation as to which can command the victory. May it speedily follow that ancient and world-known banner, upon which are inscribed words fit to sustain every man under the most arduous trials to which duty may expose him—

DIEU ET MON DROIT.

THE END.



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