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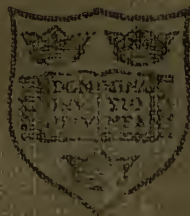
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A SHORT HISTORY
OF RUSSIA

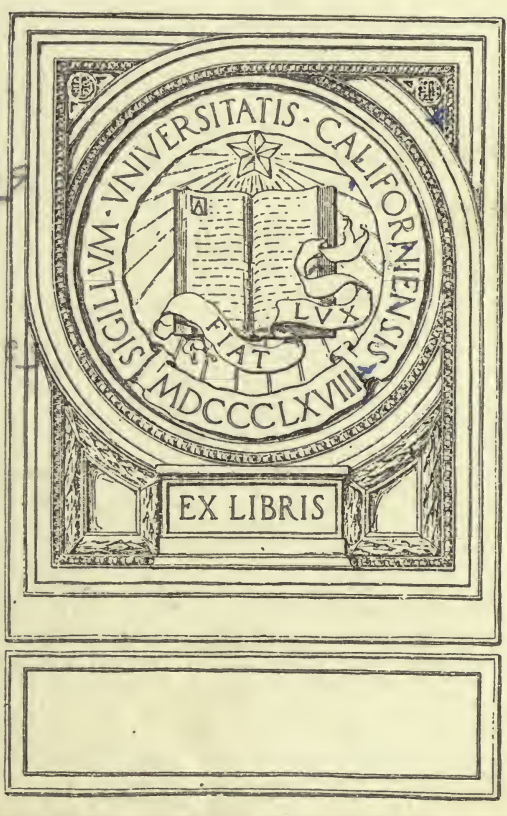
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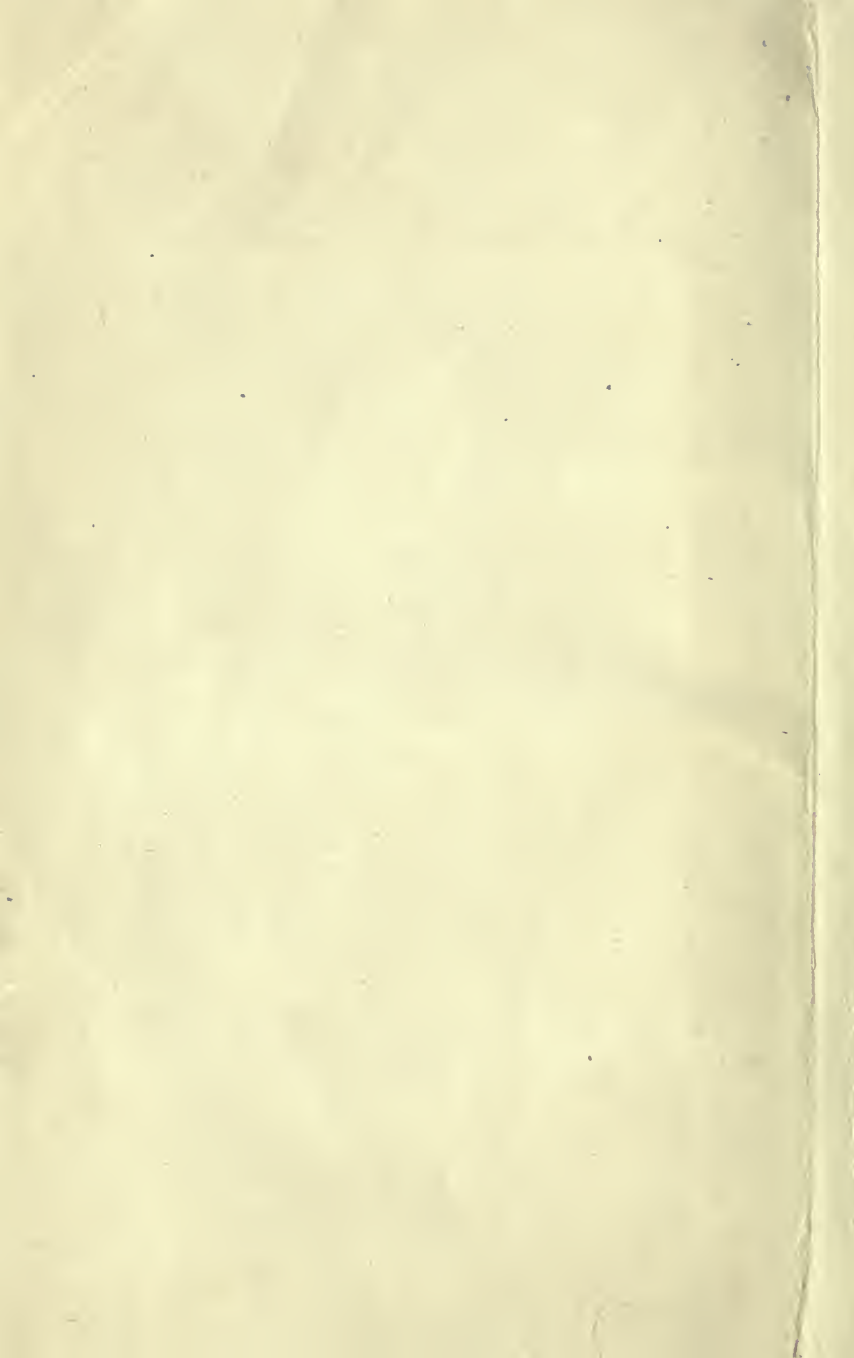
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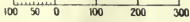


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White Sea

RUSSIA IN EUROPE

SCALE OF MILES



H. S. Hallin

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A SHORT HISTORY

OF

R U S S I A

BY

LUCY CAZALET

OXFORD

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A SHORT HISTORY OF RUSSIA

CHAPTER I

THE SLAVS

WHAT is now European Russia—the great plain of Eastern Europe, bounded on the north by the White Sea, on the east by the Urál Mountains, on the south by the Black Sea, and on the west by the Baltic—was about the ninth century A.D. inhabited, in its central portion, by the various tribes of the Eastern Slavs, who had originally migrated there from the banks of the Danube.

These Slavs dwelt together in independent tribes, in towns and villages surrounded by wooden stockades and ditches, as a protection from wild beasts and other enemies. Their houses were rude wooden huts, and in every family the father, as head of the house, held absolute sway and exacted implicit obedience.

Matters of public importance, such as the carrying on of war, or the defence of the towns, were decided upon in council by the members of each community, and this council was called the *Véché*, and was, more or less, the equivalent of the Saxon Witenagemot.

The Slavs hunted in the vast forests and bogs that covered the country, fished in the rivers, tilled

the ground in a rude and primitive manner, and even carried on a certain amount of trade in natural products with their neighbours.

The women performed all household duties, brought up the children, and on the death of their husband were burned on his funeral pyre, together with his weapons, his horse, and any other cherished possessions he might require in the after-life.

The Slavs believed in the immortality of the soul, and thought the life beyond the grave would be a continuation of the earthly life.

The religion of the Slavs consisted of a deification of the great elemental forces of Nature, and they consequently had many gods, of whom the greatest were: Perun, god of thunder and lightning; Dazhbog¹ or Hors, god of the sun; and Stribog, god of the winds. Besides these gods, the founder of every household was supposed, after his death, to return to earth in spiritual form, and as the Domovoi or House-god, protect his descendants from many evils.

The Slavs erected no temples to their gods and had no regular priesthood, but the head of each family offered up prayer and sacrifice in his own house. In early times they made no idols to their gods, but later large figures of wood or stone were set up for worship in public places, and before them human sacrifices were occasionally offered, the victim being chosen by lot. Wizards, witches, pixies and mermaids of course played a great part

¹ *Bog* in Russian means *God*.

in their superstitions, and were supposed to have marvellous powers.

The Slavs had three great festivals in the year, two in honour of the sun—celebrated approximately about Christmas and midsummer—and the third to welcome the coming of spring.

Hospitality was considered the greatest virtue, and a poor man was even justified in stealing what was necessary for the entertainment of a stranger.

CHAPTER II

THE ORIGIN OF RUSSIA

ALTHOUGH the Slavs lived in independent tribes, there were frequent quarrels and wars among them, which not only gave their warlike neighbours ample opportunity of raiding them and exacting tribute, but generally interfered with the peaceful development of the country.

This state of affairs at last decided the Slavs, worn out by internal strife and outside oppression, to seek help from the Norsemen who lived on the shores of the Baltic.

They sent an embassy to the Norse tribe of Russia and said: 'Our land is wide and fertile, but there is neither law nor order in it; come and reign over us, and be our princes.'

The Norsemen accepted the invitation, and in 862 three Viking brothers, Rurik, Sinius, and

Truvor, settled in the Slav towns of Novgorod,¹ Bélo-ózero,² and Izborsk. From this time the land of the Slavs took the name of Rus, or Russia.

Two years later Sinius and Truvor died, and then Rurik annexed their lands to his principedom of Novgorod, and became sole ruler.

Two of his captains, Askold and Dir, went south as far as Kiev, and asked the townsfolk to whom they paid tribute. 'To the Hozars,' replied the men of Kiev. 'Then pay it to us instead,' said the Norsemen, and, with the consent of the townsfolk, they made themselves rulers of Kiev and refused to pay tribute to the Hozars, who were a nomadic tribe living in South Russia.

When Rurik died, his son Igor³ was an infant, so his kinsman Oleg³ reigned during his minority.

Oleg raised a great army, conquered Smolensk, and then sailed down the Dnieper to Kiev, where he asked Askold and Dir to meet him on the banks of the river, and charged them with having usurped the principedom of Kiev. He then put them to death and was proclaimed Prince of Kiev, with little Igor as his successor. He raised Kiev to be the capital and called it 'the Mother of Russian cities'.

A few years later Oleg carried on a successful war against the Greeks. He besieged and captured Byzantium, and returned home with enormous

¹ New town.

² White lake.

³ *Oleg* and *Igor* are the Russian forms of the Scandinavian names *Helgi* and *Ingvarr*.

booty and the promise of free trade with Byzantium for the Slav merchants.

Oleg one day met a wizard, and asked him to tell him how he would die. 'You will die through your favourite horse, O Prince!' said the wizard. 'That will I not!' cried Oleg, jumping off his horse, and he ordered his men to take it away, to care for it well, but nevermore to saddle it for him. Several years later, in the midst of a feast, Oleg remembered his favourite horse and asked what had become of it. He was told it was dead, and had been thrown to the birds years ago. Oleg wished to see its bones, and, accompanied by his courtiers, went down to the field where the skeleton lay. 'How vain were the words of the wizard!' said the Prince; 'behold, my noble steed is long since dead, while I am still alive!' So saying, Oleg touched the white skull with his foot, when a viper darted out of it and stung him. The wound festered, and Oleg died, so the words of the wizard came true. The people mourned him sincerely, and surnamed him 'Oleg the Wise'.

Igor, Rurik's son, now succeeded to the throne, and began an unsuccessful war with the Greeks. He was, however, shortly killed in a raid he made on the neighbouring Drevlians, a powerful tribe living on the banks of the river Pripet.

After his death, his wife Olga¹ reigned, and spent many years in punitive expeditions against the

¹ *Olga* is the Russian form of the Scandinavian name *Helga*.

Drevlians to avenge her husband. When her thirst for vengeance was at last satisfied, she turned her thoughts to religion and was the first Russian princess to embrace Christianity. She journeyed to Byzantium, and was publicly baptized by the Patriarch of that city in the Church of St. Sophia, A.D. 957.

When Svyatoslav, Igor's son, was grown up, his mother Olga gave him the throne, and the young prince at once plunged into a war with the Hozars. He defeated them and annexed their tributaries, the Vyatichi. The Greek Emperor Nicephorus, wishing to break the power of his enemies the Bolgars, offered Svyatoslav a large sum of money if he would attack them in the rear. Svyatoslav agreed, reached the mouth of the Danube in boats and there defeated the army of the Bolgars, possessed himself of the whole country and made his capital at Pereyaslavets on the Danube.

Meanwhile the Pechenegs, a horde of nomads inhabiting the southern steppes, attacked and besieged Kiev—which was only saved by the timely arrival of Pretich, one of Svyatoslav's captains—so Olga recalled her son from Bulgaria and made him promise not to leave Kiev again during her lifetime.

She died soon after, and then Svyatoslav again went to Pereyaslavets, only to find that the Bolgars had meanwhile made peace with the Greeks, and had now risen against the Russians and shut them out of the town. He soon reconquered not only Pereya-

slavets, but the whole of Bulgaria, and then began a long war against the Greeks, which he waged with varying success—at one time he even crossed the Balkans and laid siege to Adrianople—until he was finally defeated by the Emperor John Tzimiskes and forced to give up all claims to Bulgaria and return to his own country.

On his homeward journey to Kiev he was unexpectedly attacked by the Pechenegs near the Rapids of the Dnieper, and killed in battle.

CHAPTER III

VLADÍMIR AND HIS SUCCESSORS

BEFORE leaving for Bulgaria Svyatoslav had, as was the custom in those days, divided his country between his sons, giving Kiev to his eldest son Yaropolk, Volynia to Oleg, and Novgorod to Vladímir¹.

Soon after Svyatoslav's death a quarrel arose between Yaropolk and Oleg, and ended in a war in which Oleg was killed, and Yaropolk took possession of his lands.

This angered Vladímir, who at once declared war on Yaropolk, and started for Kiev with a large army. On his way south he saw the beautiful Rogneda, daughter of Rogvold, Prince of Polotsk, and wished to marry her. Rogneda was already betrothed to Yaropolk, and refused to give him up; whereupon

¹ Ruler of the World.

Vladimir killed her father, Rogvold, seized his lands, and married Rogneda by force.

He then went on to Kiev, where he defeated Yaropolk and had him put to death, and thus became sole ruler of Russia.

Like most of his predecessors, Vladimir was bent on enlarging his dominions, and was continually engaged in warfare with his neighbours, especially the warlike Pechenegs.

He is, however, chiefly remarkable for having adopted Christianity. A Greek missionary came to him at Kiev and, having told him the story of the Gospels, showed him a picture of the Last Judgment. Vladimir was much impressed by this picture, and, after listening to the Greek's exhortations, called a council of his *boyars* or lords, and the elders of the people, to advise him about adopting Christianity. The *boyars* suggested that before giving up the old gods it would be well to send an embassy of ten *boyars* into foreign lands to study the various forms of worship and decide which religion it would be wisest to adopt. On their return Vladimir again summoned a council to hear the report of the ambassadors.

When the ten *boyars* had come to Byzantium the Patriarch had had the church most gorgeously decorated, and ordered a special service which so impressed the ambassadors that, in their own words, 'they knew not whether they were on earth or in heaven.'

On their return to Kiev they described the glories they had seen, and strongly advised the adoption of the Greek faith. The year after, Vladímir was besieging the town of Korsun in the Crimea, and as he met with unexpectedly stubborn resistance, he vowed that if he took the town he would embrace Christianity. Shortly after, a traitor—Athanasius the Korsunite—shot an arrow into the Russian camp bearing a message telling Vladímir how to cut off the water-supply of the town. The town was forced to surrender, and Vladímir became a Christian, and, having made peace with the Greeks and married their Princess Anne, returned to Kiev.

Here he caused all the idols to be broken down—Perun was tied to a horse's tail, beaten with rods, and thrown into the Dnieper—and then commanded the people to be baptized in the river Pochaina on pain of incurring his displeasure, A.D. 988.

The people of Kiev embraced Christianity very willingly, but many of the other towns rose against the priests Vladímir sent to convert them, and Christianity had to be introduced by force of arms.

After becoming a Christian, Vladímir became a most peaceful monarch, and devoted himself to the internal welfare of his dominions. He founded schools in Kiev, where the sons of the *boyars* were instructed by Greek priests, built many churches, and spent huge sums in charity. He was much beloved by his people, who called him 'the Bright Sun'. He died in 1015.

Before his death, Vladímir divided his possessions among his sons, giving Kiev to the eldest, and thus founding the system of the *Udély*, or separate principedoms, which during the next five centuries made the history of Russia a long and intricate story of family feuds, murder, and fratricide.

The Prince of Kiev, being the eldest son, was nominal over-lord of the other princes, but as the succession went not from father to son, but from brother to brother, the princes frequently changed their dominions, and there were perpetual quarrels, and even war, between them.

No sooner was Vladímir dead than Svyatopolk, his eldest son, caused his brothers, Boris and Gleb, to be murdered, and seized their principedoms. Yaroslav of Novgorod, his second brother, at once declared war on Svyatopolk, to avenge his murdered brothers, and there ensued a long struggle, in which the Polish king Boleslav helped Svyatopolk. Yaroslav, however, at last drove Svyatopolk to seek refuge abroad, and seized Kiev, but was in his turn attacked by his youngest brother, Mstislav of Tmutarakan, in the far south of Russia, who had hired Hozar mercenaries to besiege Kiev.

As Mstislav could not take Kiev, which was well defended, he abandoned the siege and conquered Chernígov. Yaroslav then hired Norse mercenaries, and the brothers met in a bloody battle near Chernígov, after which they made peace and decided to divide Russia between them.

Yaroslav kept Kiev and the right bank of the Dnieper, while Mstislav took the left bank. After Mstislav's death, Yaroslav became sole ruler.

He surrounded Kiev with a stone wall with gilt gateways, and built several churches both there and in Novgorod. He also had religious books translated from the Greek, and founded a small library. He died in A.D. 1054.

Yaroslav divided his possessions among his sons, and they in their turn did the same, with the result that for the next fifty years Russia was in a state of perpetual civil war, and the principdom of Kiev passed and repassed from one prince to another.

The Pólovtsy, a warlike tribe which about this time came from Asia and settled in the steppes of southern Russia, took full advantage of this state of disorder and raided the Russian territories most mercilessly, until one of Yaroslav's grandsons, Vladímir Monomakh,¹ at last called upon the other princes to forget their differences and combine against the common enemy. He led a Russian army against the Pólovtsy, defeated them, and returned laden with booty.

Vladímir Monomakh was a great favourite not only with his own subjects but also with the people of Kiev, who, on the death of their prince, Svyatopolk II, put aside his lawful heir, Oleg, and made Vladímir prince of Kiev, where he reigned peacefully until his death in 1125.

¹ *Monomakh* is a Greek word meaning *gladiator*.

Vladimir was a scholar and left a book of 'Instructions' for his sons, in which he exhorts his children to have the fear of God in their hearts; to be true to their word; not to be slothful, but to judge the people in person; and to be free in the entertainment of envoys and visitors, whether they be rich or poor, humble or important, for it was by them that good or evil report was circulated.

CHAPTER IV

THE RISE OF THE PRINCEDOM OF SÚZDAL AND OF NOVGOROD THE GREAT

AMONG the sons of Vladimir Monomakh the most remarkable was Yúri Dolgorúki (George of the Long Arms), prince of Súzdal, a large tract of land between the upper reaches of the Volga and the Oká. He was a very warlike prince, and after many struggles succeeded in possessing himself of Kiev, but his chief claim to remembrance is that he was the founder of Moscow, which was destined to become the most important town of Russia.

He chose for its site a hill on the left bank of the Moskvá just where it is joined by the little river Neglínnyaya, and there built a small wooden town round a hermit's cell. This later on became the famous *Kremlin* or citadel of Moscow, A.D. 1147. Yúri's son, Andréi Bogolyúbski, succeeded his father in Súzdal, and at once sent an army to

reconquer Kiev, which had regained its independence at his father's death. The town was stormed in 1169, and for two days it was given over to pillage by the Súzdal men.

Having thus made himself master of Kiev, Andréi did not go and live there, but removed his capital to the town of Vladímir on the Klyázma, in the land of Súzdal, and gave Kiev to his youngest brother Gleb. After that Kiev lost all its importance, while Vladímir became the chief city of Russia.

Andréi strove to increase his dominions by attacking the prosperous town of Novgorod, but his army was most disastrously defeated. He then hit upon the plan of forbidding his subjects to sell grain to the people of Novgorod, and this prohibition put the people of Novgorod to such inconvenience that they sent an envoy to him, suing for peace and accepting one of his sons to be their prince.

Andréi ruled Súzdal as absolute monarch, gave no lands either to his brothers or his sons, brooked no interference, and would not, as was customary, ask the advice of the *boyars*. He treated them very harshly and even put some of them to death. This so incensed the *boyars* that about twenty of them formed a conspiracy to kill him, and he was murdered in his palace in 1174.

His brother Vsevolod II, who succeeded him avenged his death by having his murderers sewn up in sacks and thrown into a lake.

At the beginning of the thirteenth century Russia

was composed of seven independent principedoms, viz. Kiev, Súzdal, Smolénsk, Chernígov, Volynia, Gálich, and Novgorod.

Of these, Novgorod, extending from the Gulf of Finland, the Upper Volga, and Lake Peipus, to the White Sea, and almost to the Urál Mountains, was the largest. The country was covered with dense forests, and had a barren, sandy soil, so the people naturally turned more to trade than to agriculture.

Novgorod, the chief town, was a flourishing trading centre, and was in every way the most remarkable of Russian towns. It was in constant communication with the free towns of the Hanseatic League, and carried on a brisk trade in fur, tallow, hides, and hemp, and imported arms, cloth, wines, and other foreign products.

The power of the princes of Novgorod was very limited, and their reign depended entirely on the will of the people.

The supreme power was vested in the *Véché*, which was a public meeting or council, summoned by a bell and held in the big square. It was attended by all the inhabitants of Novgorod, both *boyars* and commoners, and decided all matters of importance. The *Véché* had the power to elect or depose the prince, declare war, judge criminals, elect all municipal officers—the chief of whom was called the *posádnik*—and even to designate three candidates for the archbishopric. The names of these three candidates were written down, and the scrolls

placed on the high altar of the Church of St. Sophia, and a blind man or a small boy was sent to take two away. The candidate whose name remained on the altar then became archbishop.

Novgorod became a most rich and powerful town, and was usually spoken of as 'the Lord Great Novgorod'.

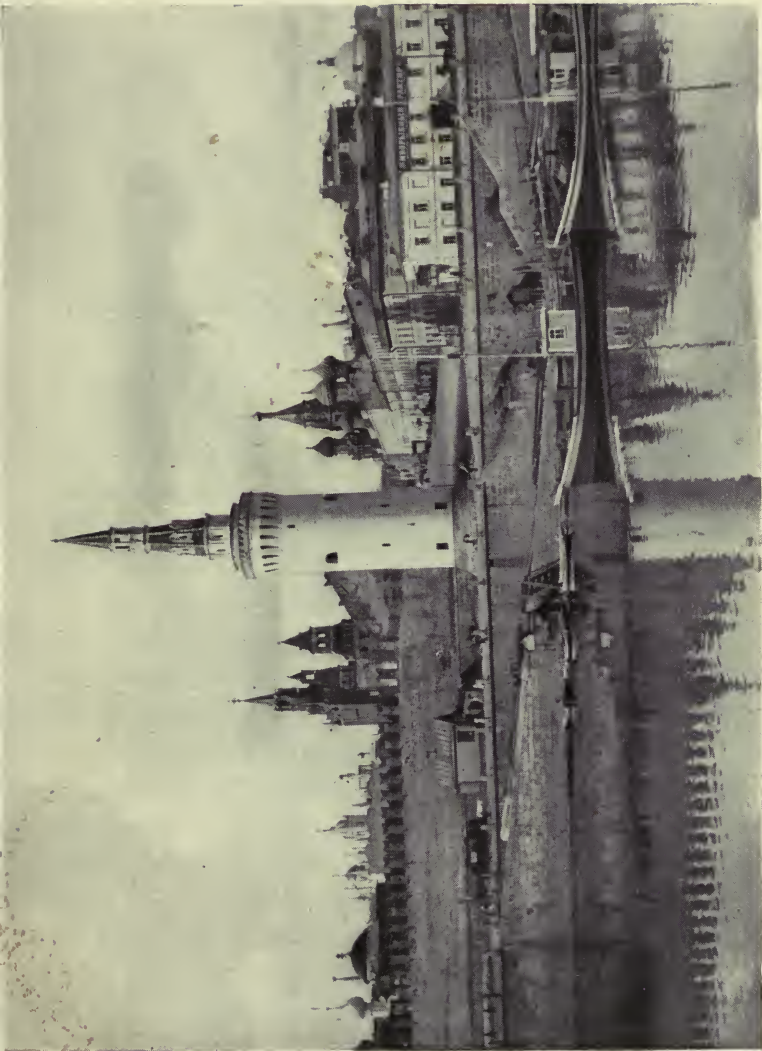
Next in size was Súzdal, which lay rather to the south-east of Novgorod, along the valleys of the Volga, Klyázma, Oká, and their tributaries. It was a land of forest and bog, interspersed with tracts of open country and cut by many winding rivers, which in the absence of roads formed natural channels of communication between the chief towns. The soil was poor and badly tilled, but in the fields, rye, buckwheat, flax, and hemp could be cultivated, and the forests supplied quantities of timber, bark, and bast. The people were intelligent and pushing, and carried on many industries, which supplied not only their own but also their neighbours' needs, and made the towns of Súzdal into flourishing trading centres, while their *korobéiniki* (pedlars or packmen) carried their goods all over Russia. Smolénsk, situated to the south-west of Súzdal, was smaller and far less important than its more powerful neighbours, although its climate and natural features were almost identical. It was the 'half-way house' on the way from Súzdal to Lithuania and the other lands (of what is now West Russia), and as it

formed the watershed between the Dnieper and the Western Dviná, it had a large carrying trade along these rivers.

Chernígov, lying along the Desna, with its valuable forests, and Kiev, in the valley of the Dnieper, were the most fertile princedoms of Russia. The soil was rich, and agriculture and cattle-breeding formed the principal occupation of the people. Besides this the town of Kiev carried on a brisk trade with Constantinople, and was not only 'the Mother of Russian Cities', but the intellectual centre of the whole country. This continued until it was sacked by Andréi Bogolyúbski, Prince of Súzdal, when the prestige of Kiev gradually waned, and two powerful rivals, Volynia and Gálich, arose on its western border.

Volynia was a fertile, corn-growing land lying between the upper reaches of the Pripet and the western and the southern Bug. It had strong cities, such as Vladímir-Volýnsk and Dorogobúzh, and a warlike population, and for years it was the bulwark of Russia against the Poles and Lithuanians.

Gálich, lying to the south-west of Volynia, between it and the Carpathians, was gradually absorbed by its warlike neighbour, and became a province of Volynia. It was mostly a level plain, fertile and well watered, except in the part occupied by the foot-hills of the Carpathians, where it was densely covered with forests and the country



SOUTH-EAST CORNER OF THE KREMLIN

was wild and broken. Its ancient capital, Gálích, was situated on the Dniester, and another town, Peremýshl, was important even in the eleventh century.

CHAPTER V

THE TARTAR INVASION

DURING the first half of the thirteenth century the Tartars invaded Russia. They came from the banks of the Amur in Eastern Asia, and were a nation of fierce nomads living together in hordes. Timuchin, or *Chinghiz Khan*, as he is generally called, united all these hordes under his rule, swept victoriously across Asia and appeared on the banks of the Don, where he defeated the Pólovtsy.

The Pólovtsy sent messengers to Mstislav, the dashing prince of Gálích, warning him that if the Russian princes did not help them, they would, in their turn, be overrun by the Tartars.

Mstislav persuaded the other Russian princes to combine with himself and the Pólovtsy and attack the Tartars on the banks of the Kalka, but just before the battle quarrels arose between the princes, and they would not attack the enemy together.

The Tartars, taking advantage of this, defeated each prince separately, and after a stubborn fight forced the last of them, Mstislav of Kiev, to surrender. Mstislav did so, on condition that he was allowed to return unharmed to his own country, but the

Tartars seized him and his officers and killed them by crushing them under boards. The Tartars then returned to Asia, but thirteen years later they came again under Baty, *Chinghiz Khan's* grandson, and overran nearly the whole of Russia.

They crossed the Volga in the winter of 1237, attacked Ryazán, and then swept over the whole of Súzdal, burnt Moscow and Kolómna, and besieged the town of Vladímir on the Klyázma.

There prince Yúri and his followers had determined to make a stand, but the Tartars put a fence round the town, attacked it with battering rams, and after four days of hard fighting, took it by storm, and reduced it to ashes.

Yúri rallied the remains of his army and attacked the Tartars on the river Sit, but was defeated and killed in battle.

The Tartars then turned towards Novgorod, but the vast bogs and forests of the country hampered their movements, and they thought it wiser to attack the more southerly parts of Russia.

In 1240 they sacked Kiev, and then overran Poland and Hungary. About this time Baty built a town on the lower Volga, which he called Sarai, and which became the capital of the Tartars of the Golden Horde. He made all the Russian princes appear before him and swear fealty to him, and appointed the prince of Súzdal over-lord over the others.

Thus the Tartar rule was firmly established, and

for two and a half centuries the people paid a heavy poll-tax, and the princes did homage to the ruling *Khan*, and received his permission to rule in their principedoms.

The Tartar rule did not have very much effect on the habits and customs of the Russians, as their daily life and their religious beliefs were not interfered with, but the continual raids the Tartars made on them kept up a feeling of unrest and insecurity in the country and very seriously delayed the peaceful development of the nation.

The dominion of the Tartars over Russia was a direct consequence of the *Udély* system of the government, for the princes of the various principalities were individually too weak to resist, and would not forget their private quarrels, to combine against the national enemy.

CHAPTER VI

ALEXANDER NÉVSKI, DANIEL OF GÁLICH, AND THE RISE OF MOSCOW

WHILE Baty was conquering the more southerly portions of Russia, Novgorod was reigned over by Alexander, a son of Yaroslav of Súzdal, and was engaged in war with the Swedes, who at the request of the Pope wished to convert Novgorod to the Roman Catholic faith.

They sailed up the Neva, but were met by Alexander at the point where the Izhera falls into

it. There is a legend that on the eve of the battle the captain of Alexander's guard had a vision in which he saw the saints Boris and Gleb hastening in a galley to help Alexander. He told the prince of his dream, and so inspired Alexander that next day he led his men with such daring that he gained a complete victory and saved Novgorod from the Swedes. After this battle Alexander adopted the surname of Névski.

Soon after this Alexander was involved in a war with the German 'Knights of the Sword', who had settled on the shores of the Baltic. These were originally an order of militant monks who had penetrated into the country to introduce Christianity. They were followed by merchants from Bremen, and other German colonists, who in time founded flourishing towns—such as Riga—near the coast, and gradually spread inland. They had conquered Pskov, and were desirous of attacking Novgorod, but Alexander marched against them, drove them out of Pskov, and met them in a pitched battle on the ice of Lake Peipus. The Germans were defeated and such numbers of them slain that the ice is supposed to have turned red. The battle was called the 'Ice Massacre', A. D. 1242.

On the death of his father, Alexander succeeded, to the principedom of Súzdal and the over-lordship, and as he fully realized that Russia was too disorganized to be able to offer any resistance to the Tartars, he went down to the Golden Horde to be

officially recognized and do homage. He even induced the people of Novgorod to pay their share of the poll-tax, and by paying the tribute regularly, kept the Tartars from making inroads on his country. He died in 1263.

A contemporary of Alexander's, Daniel of Gálich, was determined to break the power of the Tartars, and refortified the towns they had destroyed. He asked the Pope to help him, and a crusade against the Tartars was actually preached in Europe, but found no followers, and the Tartars soon sent a raid into Gálich and forced Daniel to return to his allegiance.

After Daniel's death in 1264, Casimir III of Poland conquered Gálich. The other principdoms of South-Western Russia (Kiev, Volynia, &c.) were conquered by the Lithuanians, who freed them from the Tartar yoke, but converted them to the Roman Church, and eventually attached them to Poland under King Yagáilo and his successors.

The town of Moscow was meanwhile growing in size and importance, and Daniel, Alexander Névski's youngest son, even took the title of 'Prince of Moscow'.

Under his son Yúri¹ began a long struggle with the princes of Tver for the titles of over-lord and Prince of Vladímir.

The *Khan* had appointed Michael of Tver to this dignity, as he was the head of the family, but Yúri

¹ = George.

of Moscow went to live in the Golden Horde, married the *Khan's* sister, and by his lavish generosity soon induced his brother-in-law to depose Michael, and give the over-lordship to him. When he returned to Súzdal he had to fight for his new dignity, and was defeated. He then accused Michael of various treasonable acts against the *Khan*, and the Prince of Tver was called to the Golden Horde and there killed. After Yúri's death his brother, Ivan Kalitá, succeeded to his principedom and his quarrels, and the squabbles with Tver continued. At last Ivan, who was very rich, bribed the *Khan* to give him an army of 50,000 Tartars, with which he completely broke the power of Tver and annexed it to his possessions. He was confirmed in his supremacy by the *Khan*, and appointed to collect the tribute paid to the Golden Horde by all the Russian princes. This gave him the opportunity of enriching himself and increasing the power of Moscow at the expense of the other principedoms, and gained him the surname of Kalitá, or 'the Money Bag'.

Although Ivan bore the title of Prince of Vladímir, he made Moscow his residence and caused it to become the religious capital of Russia by persuading the Metropolitan Peter to remove there from Vladímir.

He did much to beautify the town, surrounded the *Kremlin* with an oaken stockade and dug a deep moat on its north side, thus surrounding it by water on all sides, and making it a very strong fortress.

CHAPTER VII

DMÍTRI DONSKÓI

THE most remarkable of Ivan Kalitá's descendants was his grandson Dmitri, who determined to throw off the Tartar yoke and refused to pay the heavy tribute imposed by them. Mamai, who then ruled in the Golden Horde, demanded that it should be paid, threatened to visit Russia with fire and sword, and formed an alliance with Yagáilo of Lithuania.

Dmítri collected an army of 200,000 men at Kolómna, and before starting went to the newly founded monastery of Troitsa¹ to receive the blessing of St. Sergius. St. Sergius gave him two of his monks, Peresvét and Oslyába, who had been famous warriors, to be his companions, and Dmítri left Moscow to join the army.

At the end of his first day's march he lay down to sleep under a pine tree, and had a vision in which St. Nicholas promised him victory. When he awoke he saw an *ikóna*² hanging on the tree, and took it with him to the war. He afterwards built a monastery dedicated to St. Nicholas, on the site of his camp.

Dmítri led his men far into the steppes to meet the Tartars, and at last came up with them on the banks of the Don, at the field of Kulíkovo.³ He placed part of his men in ambush in a dense wood,

¹ The Trinity.

² Holy image.

³ The field of woodcocks.

and attacked Mamai with the remainder of his force. For hours the victory wavered, but then Dmíttri's reserves broke from their hiding-place, the Tartars were routed, and their camp and stores fell into the hands of the Russians. The Lithuanians, hearing of the defeat of the Tartars, turned back and returned to their own country.

Dmíttri assumed the title of Donskói and returned to Moscow in triumph, but this did not last long, for two years later the Tartars under Tokhtamysh again entered Russia and marched on Moscow. Dmíttri retired to Kostromá to collect his army, hoping that Moscow would be able to hold out against the enemy.

It was besieged, but the *Kremlin* was so strong (Dmíttri had built a stone wall with battlements and iron gates round it) that Tokhtamysh offered to make terms if the Moscovites would pay a ransom and allow him to visit the *Kremlin*. Upon this the Moscovites unsuspectingly opened their gates and received the *Khan* unarmed, and with costly gifts, whereupon the Tartars set upon them, and sacked and burnt the *Kremlin*.

This act of treachery so weakened Dmitri's power that he could not recover from it, and was obliged to submit to the Tartars and again pay tribute, and thus lost all the fruits of his victory at Kulíkovo.

Dmíttri died in 1389, leaving all his possessions to his eldest son, and from that time the throne has always descended in the direct line of succession.



IVAN III (THE GREAT)

d. 1505

CHAPTER VIII

THE DOWNFALL OF NOVGOROD AND THE END OF
THE TARTAR SUPREMACY

THE princes of Moscow were always jealous of the wealth and importance of Novgorod, and used every means in their power to weaken that flourishing city. At last Ivan ¹ III, Dmítiri Donskói's great-grandson, determined to conquer it.

The rulers of Novgorod, realizing that they would not be able to withstand his power unless they sought help from their neighbours, wished to place themselves under the protection of Casimir IV of Lithuania, but, as Casimir was a Roman Catholic, many of the citizens felt it would be an act of treachery to the Russian Church. Then there arose two political parties in Novgorod, the Lithuanian and the Moscovite, and the quarrels between them finally weakened the power of the city.

The Lithuanian faction carried the day, and entered into an alliance with Casimir on condition that he did not interfere with their religion.

When Ivan heard of this, he at once declared war and marched on Novgorod with an army reinforced by Tartar levies.

The armies met on the banks of the river Shelon, and before the battle Ivan ordered his men to shoot at the horses of the men of Novgorod.

These animals, which were quite unused to war, took fright and stampeded, causing a panic among

¹ = John.

the Novgorod men, who were mostly carpenters and other artisans, quite untrained in the use of arms. The Tartars then fell upon them from the rear, and the Moscovites gained a complete victory.

Ivan then besieged Novgorod, and forced the citizens to pay him fifteen and a half thousand roubles and break off their alliance with Casimir.

He then returned to Moscow, but Novgorod continued to be in a state of unrest caused by the quarrels of the rival parties. The *boyars*, too, oppressed the commoners, and the meetings of the *Véché* often terminated in a free fight. Many of the men of Novgorod, unable to obtain justice in their own city, brought their cases before Ivan, who thus made himself the champion of the commoners against the *boyars*.

In 1478 Ivan again besieged Novgorod, and sent a herald into the town to say: 'Be it known to you that I intend to rule in Novgorod as I rule in Moscow!'

As no choice was left them, the citizens surrendered, and Ivan deposed the *posádnik* or mayor, dissolved the *Véché* and took the bell which used to summon it, back with him to Moscow. Thus 'Novgorod the Great' became merely a dependency of Moscow.

During the fifteenth century the Golden Horde had gradually divided into three independent Khanates, viz. the Crimean, the Kazán, and the Golden Horde. The Crimean Khanate and the

Golden Horde were continually at war with each other, and Ivan III took advantage of this and refused to pay tribute. *Khan* Akhmat of the Golden Horde sent envoys to collect it, and, as these were murdered in Moscow, he marched his army into Russia, and at the same time entered into an alliance with Casimir IV of Lithuania.

Ivan met the Tartars on the banks of the Ugra, but was afraid to give battle, and the two armies remained facing each other all through the summer and autumn. When the winter began, the Tartars, from want of winter clothing, were forced to turn south, and Akhmat was soon after murdered by one of his captains.

A few months later the Golden Horde was completely destroyed by Mengli Ghirei, the Crimean *Khan*, and thus Russia was freed from the yoke of the Tartars in 1480.

Ivan III built many churches in Moscow, the most famous being the Cathedral of the Assumption, where the coronations ^{took} take place. He encouraged foreign architects, physicians, and artisans to come to Moscow and teach the natives. In 1472 he married Sophia Paleologus, niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium, and he introduced a great deal of luxury and ceremonial into the Russian court life, which had, until then, been very simple.

He died in 1505, leaving the throne to his son Vasili¹ III.

¹ = Basil.

CHAPTER IX

VASÍLI III, 1505-33

IVAN IV, 1533-84

VASÍLI III followed his father's policy of gradually absorbing the smaller principdoms of Russia into the kingdom of Moscow. Thus he annexed Pskov and Ryazán, and carried on a war with Lithuania for the possession of Smolénsk, which he besieged and captured.

The Crimean Tartars, who had in the previous reign been the allies of Moscow, now became her worst enemies. They were, of course, separated from Moscow by the arid steppes of South Russia, but they were very dangerous, because they were always making unexpected raids on the country.

Vasíli's first wife had no children, so he forced her to take the veil, and was married again to Elena Glínskaya (the daughter of a powerful *boyar*), by whom he had one son. He died in 1533.

At Vasíli's death, his son, Ivan IV, was only three years old, and during his minority the princes Shúiski, Glínski, and Bélski, his mother's relations, carried on the business of State. Among them and their quarrels the little prince was shamefully neglected. He was a child of wonderful natural ability, but he was allowed to grow up without restraint, and his worst qualities were developed. He was naturally cruel, and was allowed to torture animals and throw cats from the towers of the

Kremlin for amusement. He was fond of reading, and was remarkably well read in the books of the time, which were principally religious works and chronicles.

When he was seventeen, Ivan was crowned in the Cathedral of the Assumption, and took the title of Tsar of Muscovy. Two weeks later he married his first wife, Anastasia.

At this time, a terrible calamity befell Moscow. The town was almost entirely built of wood, and even the streets, instead of being paved, were covered with planks laid on the ground. A fire began, and was spread by a violent gale, until the whole city was a sea of flame and the inhabitants had to fly for their lives. Ivan and his court fled to the Sparrow Hills, and watched the conflagration from there.

After this misfortune Ivan decided that he would himself take the management of affairs, and chose as his counsellors the priest Sylvester, and a *boyar* named Adáshev. By their advice he called a meeting of representatives from every town, which was called the *Zémski Sobór*,¹ and before this assembly he swore to administer justice to all, and to protect the people from the oppression of the *boyars*.

Ivan's first war was with the Tartars of Kazan, who continually harried the outskirts of his dominions, so he determined to attack Kazan, and set out with an army of 150,000 men.

¹ Or, council of the whole land.

Ivan personally superintended the siege of Kazan, and with the help of German engineers succeeded in blowing up the subterranean passage through which the citizens fetched water from the river Kazanka. Kazan, however, held out bravely, and it was only when the German engineers laid mines under the walls and blew them up, that the town was taken by storm in 1552.

Four years later Ivan conquered Astrakhan, a Tartar stronghold at the mouth of the Volga, and Sylvester and Adáshev advised him to attack the Crimean Tartars, and so completely clear the country of them, but Ivan feared the intervention of the Sultan of Turkey, and returned to Moscow.

A few years later Devlet Ghirei, the Crimean *Khan*, took advantage of the Russian army being engaged in a war with Livonia, to march an army on Moscow. He reached the suburbs unopposed and set fire to them, whereupon the conflagration spread to the whole town. The *Kremlin*, which had been rebuilt in stone and brick, alone escaped the fire, and it was so strongly fortified that the Tartars were afraid of attacking it, and returned to the Crimea.

Next year they again invaded Russia, but were met by an army under Prince Vorótinski at Lopásnya near Moscow and completely defeated (A.D. 1572).

Like his father and his grandfather, Ivan was anxious to bring Russia into closer relations with Western Europe, and encouraged foreign artisans

and skilled workmen to come to Moscow, where he established the first printing press in Russia. He sent embassies to foreign courts, and even wished to marry Queen Elizabeth of England—an offer which was courteously declined.

A band of English merchants, under Richard Chancellor, went to Moscow by way of Archangel, bearing messages of goodwill from Queen Elizabeth, and opened up trading relations with 'Muscovy', as it was then called. Ivan received them most hospitably, granted them many privileges, and allowed them to establish a factory.

The harbours of the Baltic were, at this time, closed to the Russians, being entirely in the hands of the Swedes and the German Knights of the Sword, so in 1558 Ivan made war on the latter with a view to gaining access to the sea. His army entered Livonia and laid waste more than twenty towns, whereupon the Master of the Order ceded Livonia to Poland, while Esthonia gave itself up to the Swedes.

Ivan now saw himself involved in a war against two nations, and again summoned the *Zémski Sobór* to decide whether he should continue it. The *Sobór* decided in favour of carrying it on, but although the Russians successfully held Pskov against the Poles, they gained no real advantages, and in 1582 Ivan made peace with the Poles and relinquished Livonia to them.

In 1560 Ivan's wife, Anastasia, died, and after

her death a great change came over him. He became suspicious of everybody, removed his wise counsellors Sylvester and Adáshev, banished the former to a monastery on the White Sea, beheaded many of his friends, and generally looked upon the *boyars* as enemies and traitors. He left Moscow and took up his abode in the village of Alexándrovsk, a small place situated in a dense forest. Here he lived surrounded by his *Opríchniki*—a rough body-guard of a thousand men, commanded by Malyúta Skurátov, and chosen from among the small nobility, but perfectly devoted to him. They formed his court and allowed themselves unbridled licence, killing and robbing whomsoever they chose, under pretext of punishing the Tsar's enemies.

Ivan led a curious life. He dressed three hundred of his *Opríchniki* as monks, and lived among them in almost monastic austerity, broken by wild hunting expeditions, and wilder feasts and revels. Occasionally a frenzy for bloodshed would come upon him, and he would order a whole series of executions and tortures. Thus in 1570 he went to Novgorod, where he had been told there was a plot against him, and ordered his *Opríchniki* to destroy the monasteries and the houses of the *boyars*, and put to death several thousand of the citizens.

Ivan was surnamed 'the Terrible', a name he richly deserved. He was subject to attacks of blind fury, and in one of these he hurled his iron-shod staff at his eldest son, Ivan, and killed him.



THE CROWN OF KAZAN

By Anastasia, Ivan had two sons, Ivan and Feódor,¹ but after her death he was several times married, and by his last wife, Mary, he had a little son, Dmítri.

Ivan the Terrible died in 1584, leaving his throne to his second son, Feódor.

During the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries a community of freebooters called the 'Cossacks' had gradually come into existence in the steppes bordering on the Don. It was recruited from among outlaws, criminals, and vagabonds, in fact from all the elements which could not be reconciled with law and order, and formed a powerful band of armed men, who carried on perpetual skirmishes with the Tartars, but quite as frequently attacked Russian merchants sailing down the Don and Volga.

The Cossacks chose a ruler or *Hetman* from among themselves, and he led them in battle, but his power was controlled by a meeting or *Véché*, called also the *Krug* or *Rada*.²

In Ivan's time the depredations of the Cossacks were so frequent that he sent an army to clear the Volga of them, and it was then that Yermak, one of their leaders, took his followers up the Kamá and took service with the Strogánovs. These Strogánovs were a family of merchants who owned large estates and salt-pans on the banks of the Kamá, and as they were much molested by the

¹ = Theodore.

² i.e. *circle* or *council*.

Urál Tartars and other wild tribes, they had been allowed to build forts on their land and maintain a small army to protect themselves.

When Yermak and his Cossacks came to them they equipped an expedition against the Urál Tartars. About a thousand Cossacks successfully crossed the Urál Mountains and, after many battles, took Sibír, *Khan* Kuchum's capital, and broke the power of the Tartars.

Yermak at once dispatched messengers to Ivan, telling him that he had conquered and annexed Siberia in the Tsar's name, and in return for these services Ivan granted him a large sum of money and a free pardon for all his former offences.

CHAPTER X

FEÓDOR IVÁNOVICH,¹ 1584-98

TSAR FEÓDOR, Ivan's successor, was a kind, mild man, very different from his father. He was very simple in his ways and very religious, and spent his time going about to the various monasteries, and left the management of the State to his brother-in-law, Borís Godunóv.

Borís was descended from a noble Tartar family and was a most able statesman who ruled the country far better than Feódor could have done.

In 1591 the Crimean Tartars again invaded

¹ Son of Ivan.

Russia, and moved on Moscow by forced marches, hoping to surprise the town.

The Russian army was, at the time, engaged in a campaign against the Swedes, but Borís hastily had the monasteries on the south and east sides of Moscow put in a state of defence. In the gap between the Sparrow Hills and the last in this line of monasteries he made an entrenched camp and drew up what troops he could collect.

When Kazi Ghirei's army advanced, the *Khan* was quite surprised to find Moscow prepared to oppose him, and Borís sent out a few hundred soldiers to engage his advance guard. All day they fought on the sandy plain before Moscow, while the Russians kept up a cannonade from the towers of the *Kremlin*. At night, the Tartars received news that reinforcements were coming to the Russians from Novgorod, so under cover of the dark they withdrew and returned to the southern steppes.

In 1591 an event occurred which later on caused many troubles in Russia—Feódor's little step-brother, Dmítiri, was murdered while playing in the square of Uglich, where he lived with his mother. The people of Uglich were so enraged by this act that they fell upon the assassins and killed them. Feódor was much grieved at the news, and sent a *boyar*, Vasíli Shúiski, to inquire into the circumstances. Shúiski returned, saying the boy had accidentally stabbed himself in an epileptic fit, and

that the people had killed innocent men as his assassins. This version of the tale did not, however, gain very much credence, and it began to be freely whispered that it was Borís Godunóv who had caused the little prince to be killed, because he hoped to succeed to the throne himself.

The most important measure of Feódor's reign was the law passed in 1592, which permanently bound the peasantry to the land. Until then, the peasants had been free to move from place to place, working for any master they pleased. The richer landowners were able to offer labourers more advantageous terms, so the peasants flocked to their estates, while the poorer nobles found it hard to get workers.

The poorer *boyars* were, however, bound in case of war to appear in the field with their 'men, horses, and arms'—a condition they found it impossible to fulfil if their estates lay fallow and unprofitable for want of labourers. They laid their case before the Tsar, and Borís advised Feódor to pass a law by which the peasants were forbidden to leave the land they lived on, and became the serfs and practically the chattels of their masters.

In Feódor's reign the Metropolitan of Moscow took the title of 'Patriarch of all Russia', and the Russian Church became quite independent of the Byzantine patriarchate.

Feódor had no children, and when he died in 1598, the line of Rurik came to an end.

CHAPTER XI

BORÍS GODUNÓV, 1598-1605

THE FALSE DMÍTTRI, 1605-6

AFTER Feódor's death his wife, Irena, took the veil in the Convent of Novodevichi, and her brother, Borís Godunóv, went to stay there with her.

The Patriarch Job and the people were anxious to make Borís Tsar, but he refused. The *Zémski Sobór* was then summoned, and also elected him, but still Borís refused the honour, and it was only when the Patriarch and people went to the convent and 'on bended knees and with tears in their eyes' begged him to accept the throne, that he consented.

The first years of his reign were very happy. He was a wise and energetic ruler, and had the good of his people at heart. Soon, however, a terrible famine followed by pestilence swept over the country, and the people believed these misfortunes to be a judgment of Heaven on a country whose Tsar was a regicide, and began to murmur against Borís, who had become very suspicious, and had executed several *boyars* for treason.

A rumour was started that the little Prince Dmíttri had not really been killed, but had been smuggled to Poland, and another boy had impersonated him at Uglich. This story, unlikely as it was, gained many believers, especially as at this time an impostor

arose in Poland and gave himself out to be Ivan the Terrible's son. He was a young monk, Gregory Otrépev, who escaped from the Chúdov Monastery in Moscow, and became a servant in the palace of a Polish nobleman. One day he pretended to be dying, and, when confessing to a priest, told him that after his death he wished 'to be buried like a king's son', and that there was a paper under his pillow which would prove his identity. The priest told his master, who took the paper, which was a cleverly forged document, proving Otrépev to be Prince Dmítiri.

The Polish nobles were taken in by the fraud, and the Jesuits, hoping through Otrépev to be able to introduce Catholicism into Russia, persuaded Sigismund III to recognize him and help him to win back his father's throne.

A powerful Polish nobleman, Yúri Mnishek, betrothed his daughter, Marina, to the false Dmítiri, and it was arranged that the marriage should take place in Moscow, and the bride receive Novgorod and Pskov as her marriage gift.

The Polish nobility then rallied round Otrépev, and in 1604 he entered Russia at the head of an army, and many towns opened their gates to him.

Borís Godunóv had meanwhile sent an envoy to the King of Poland, denouncing Otrépev as an impostor, and demanding that he should be given up. In Moscow, all who sympathized with him were thrown into prison, and he was publicly

excommunicated by the Patriarch Job as being a renegade monk.

When Otrépev crossed the frontier, Borís sent an army against him and completely defeated him at Sevsk, where he narrowly escaped capture. Unfortunately, a few days after this battle, Borís died quite suddenly, A. D. 1605.

After his death, Moscow quietly took the oath to his son, Feódor Godunóv, and the young Tsar appointed Peter Basmánov to command the troops sent against the pretender.

This proved an unfortunate choice, for Basmánov turned traitor, and with all his army went over to the false Dmítri.

The Pretender at once sent an embassy to Moscow, and stirred up the people to kill young Feódor Godunóv and his sister. This done, he had himself proclaimed Tsar, and soon after entered Moscow in triumph. He even sent for the murdered Dmítri's mother, who had become a nun, and through fear induced her to acknowledge him as her son.

The Pretender did not reign long, but in the few months he did, he showed considerable ability and energy. He was accessible to all, and astonished the *boyars* by his cleverness in council, and his resourcefulness in dealing with complicated affairs of state. He offended the people, however, by his total disregard for their customs and prejudices, and his marked preference for foreigners, and the clergy were shocked by his marrying Marina Mnishek

without making her take the Russian faith. Besides this, the Poles who had come in the train of the impostor behaved most insolently to the Moscovites, and there were continually quarrels between them and the townsfolk.

The *boyars*, who hated the Pretender, made the most of these circumstances, and under the leadership of Vasíli Shúiski formed a plot to overthrow him.

At sunrise on May 17, 1606, the *boyars* ordered the tocsin to be sounded, and, when the people gathered in the great square, told them the Poles wanted to kill the Tsar. This was the signal for a general massacre of the Poles, and in the tumult that ensued Shúiski and the *boyars* went to the *Kremlin* to kill Dmítri.

His guard of *Stréltsy*¹ (a permanent militia enrolled by Ivan the Terrible) protected him, but when the Tsaritsa Maria, Dmítri's mother, publicly announced that he was not really her son, they too turned against him, and he was killed.

His body was exposed to public derision by being shown on the Red Square with a pipe in his mouth and a mask on his chest, and was then burnt, and the ashes shot from a cannon.

¹ *Shooters.*



CHURCH OF ST. BASIL THE BLESSED (XVI c.)

CHAPTER XII

VASÍLI SHÚISKI, 1606-10

THE INTERREGNUM, OR 'THE TROUBLOUS TIMES',
1610-12

AFTER killing the false Dmitri, the *boyars* quieted Moscow, and elected Vasíli Shúiski to be Tsar, making him swear to do nothing without the consent of the *Boyárskaya Dúma*, or council of the *boyars*.

No sooner had Vasíli ascended the throne than an impostor sprang up and pretended to be the false Dmítri. He explained that Dmítri had got wind of the plot against him and had secretly left the palace, instructing a servant to personate him, and that it was this servant whom the *boyars* had killed.

It is not known who this impostor was, but he found people to believe in him, and gathered an army round him composed of Poles, Cossacks, and traitors of all sorts.

He marched on Moscow, but was defeated by Shúiski's soldiers before the very gates of the town. He then retired to an entrenched camp in the village of Túshino, twelve versts from Moscow, and from there threatened the city for over a year. There Marina Mnishek, who still hoped to remain Tsaritsa, joined him, and acknowledged him as her husband. He has always been known in history as the 'Túshino Thief'.

Vasíli Shúiski had, meanwhile, applied for help

to the Swedes, and an army of 5,000 men, under Delagardi, had been sent him. This army joined forces with some troops Michael Skopin-Shúiski, Vasíli's nephew, had collected at Novgorod, and defeated the 'Túshino Thief' in two battles.

Sigismund of Poland, who wished to take advantage of these internal disorders to make himself master of Moscow, now declared war on Russia on pretext of resenting the alliance with Sweden. He besieged Smolénsk, and ordered the Poles who were with the 'Túshino Thief' to join his army. This they did, and the impostor, left with only a small following, went to Kalúga.

The Moscow army was got ready to move to the relief of Smolénsk, under the command of Dmitri Shúiski, Vasíli's brother; but the Polish general, Zholkévski, defeated it at Klúshino, and marched on Moscow.

The Pretender, hearing of this, came back from Kalúga and took up an entrenched position in the village of Kolómenskoye, near Moscow. In the town itself riots broke out, and the citizens deposed Vasíli Shúiski and forced him into a monastery (1610).

After the deposition of Vasíli Shúiski, and with the Polish army advancing on Moscow and the 'Túshino Thief' at their gates, the *boyars* found themselves in a very awkward position, and, as a way out of the difficulty, elected Vladislav, son of the King of Poland, to the tsardom. They sent

an embassy to Sigismund announcing the election of his son, and begging him to allow the prince to come to Moscow.

Sigismund retained the ambassadors as hostages, and ordered the Polish army to occupy Moscow, but would not allow his son to go there, as he intended annexing the whole of Russia to Poland, under his own rule.

The ‘Túshino Thief’ meanwhile fled back to Kalúga, where he was shortly afterwards murdered by a peasant.

When the people of Moscow at length became aware of Sigismund’s intentions they determined to oppose the Poles, and the Patriarch Hermogen issued a proclamation calling the whole Russian people to arms.

In a very short time an army of 100,000 men assembled under the leadership of Prokópi Lyapunóv and entered the suburbs of Moscow. The Polish garrison shut itself in the *Kremlin* and prepared for a siege.

Unfortunately, the Cossacks who had joined Lyapunóv’s army would not submit to discipline, and were so angry with Lyapunóv, because he forbade them to plunder the citizens, that they killed him. After his death his army dispersed, and the Poles again held the whole of Moscow.

Sigismund had meanwhile captured Smolénsk, and the Swedes, hearing of Vladislav’s election, broke their alliance and took Novgorod.

In all these troubles and difficulties, the Russian clergy again made an effort to inspire the people with courage, and the Archimandrite of Troitsa sent a circular letter to all the towns, calling upon the people to deliver holy Moscow from the foreigners.

When this letter was received in Nizhni-Novgorod,¹ the mayor of the town, a butcher, Kuzmá Mínin by name, set about raising an army. He placed it under the command of Prince Pozhárski, one of Lyapunóv's generals, and himself collected money and supplies to carry on the war.

This army marched on Moscow, gaining recruits as it went, and reached the city at the same time as *Hetman* Hodkévich and his troops, who were bringing supplies to the Poles. Pozhárski's first task was to prevent Hodkévich from getting his supplies into the city, and this he and Mínin succeeded in doing by defeating him in several skirmishes, and he was forced to retire, leaving the Polish garrison to its fate.

The Poles stood a siege of several months in the *Kremlin*, but were at last starved into submission; and Mínin and Pozhárski entered the *Kremlin* amid public rejoicing (1612).

¹ Lower Novgorod, on the Volga.



PETER THE GREAT

1682-1725

CHAPTER XIII

THE FIRST ROMÁNOV : MICHAEL FEÓDOROVICH¹,
1612-45

As soon as the Poles were driven out of Moscow, the *Zémski Sobór* met and elected Michael Feódorovich Románov to the throne.

His father, Feódor Nikítich Románov, was the direct heir, being nephew to Ivan IV's wife, Anastasia, but Borís Godunóv, who was suspicious of any one who had a claim to the throne, had forced him to become a monk, under the name of Philaret, and had thus disqualified him for the tsardom.

Michael Feódorovich was a youth of sixteen when he was called to the throne, and was living with his mother in the Ipátev Convent at Kostromá.

The Polish troops still infested Russia in small bands, and the captain of one of these, when he heard of Michael's election, set out to kill him, and his life was only saved by the devotion of an old man, Susánin, who led the Poles astray, and in revenge was killed by them.

When Michael ascended the throne, Russia was in a pitiful state. Smolénsk was held by the Poles, Novgorod by the Swedes, and the whole country was terrorized by wandering bands of Poles and Cossacks, who robbed and burned the towns and villages.

The Cossack, *Hetman* Zarútski, proclaimed Marina

¹ Theodore's son.

Mnishek's infant son tsar, but Zarútski was captured and brought to Moscow to be impaled, and the child and his mother were thrown into prison. The child was then hanged and Marina died in prison.

Michael was obliged to carry on war simultaneously with the Poles and the Swedes, but the disorganized condition of the Russian army prevented his doing so successfully. He made peace with the Swedes and received back Novgorod, but had to give up all claim to the shores of the Gulf of Finland. The war against Poland was more prolonged, for Vladislav still claimed the tsardom, and was with difficulty beaten back from an attack on Moscow. At last Michael concluded a truce at Deúliño, by the terms of which the Poles retained the districts of Smolénsk and Séversk, but sent back the ambassadors they had treacherously imprisoned, among whom was Philaret, Michael's father.

When Philaret arrived in Moscow he was raised to the dignity of Patriarch, and became co-regent with his son. Their first endeavours were to restore internal order in the country and then to reorganize the army.

The Russian army was, at that time, a very mixed multitude. The great *boyars* appeared in the field in full armour, at the head of their men, who were all well horsed, armed with sabres and muskets, and followed by carts laden with supplies and baggage. The equipment of the poorer nobles left much to be desired, while the very poorest some-

times went to war on a farm pony, armed only with bow and arrows, and followed by a single servant carrying a bag of rusks. In time of war, the infantry was recruited from among the peasantry, and was a disorderly rabble armed with axes, pitchforks, and bows. The only regular body of soldiers were the *Stréltzy*, or musketeers, established under Ivan the Terrible, but even they were allowed to follow their various trades in time of peace, and lived with their families in the suburbs of Moscow. Michael sent for fire-arms and artillery from abroad, had the Russians instructed in European methods of warfare, and even hired several thousand foreign mercenaries.

After the expiration of the truce he sent an army under the *boyar* Shéyin to recapture Smolénsk. The siege began, but Vladislav came to the relief of the town, and besieged Shéyin in his entrenched camp. The Russians held out for a time, but famine and sickness forced them to capitulate, and Shéyin had to give up all his artillery. When he returned to Moscow he was found guilty of treason, and beheaded. Michael found it impossible to carry on the war, and concluded peace by which Poland retained Smolénsk, but Vladislav gave up all claim to the throne of Moscow.

Michael was most concerned with the internal welfare of the country, and by the end of his reign succeeded in establishing some degree of order. He died in 1645, and was succeeded by his son Alexéi.

CHAPTER XIV

ALEXÉI MIKHÁILOVICH¹, 1645-76

ALEXÉI MIKHÁILOVICH was only sixteen when he came to the throne. Soon after his accession, two hundred of the most beautiful of the *boyars'* daughters were called together in Moscow for the young Tsar to choose a wife from among them. His choice fell on Maria Miloslávskaya, and for the first few months of his reign Alexéi was content to lead a life of pleasure, leaving the management of the affairs to his father-in-law, Miloslávski, and the *boyar* Morózov.

These two exasperated the Moscow people by excessive taxation, and a riot occurred, in which several officials were killed. This had the effect of drawing the young Tsar's attention to the state of affairs, and he resolved to attend to business himself.

His first act was to revise the laws, many of which had become inadequate. One of the most important events of Alexéi's reign was the revolt of Little Russia against the Poles and its annexation to the tsardom of Moscow.

Little Russia—i. e. the south-western provinces—had passed from Lithuanian to Polish rule, and had even been forced to accept the 'Union'. This was a religious compromise between the Greek and Roman Catholic Churches, by which the people

¹ Michael's son.

were allowed to retain their Greek ritual, but acknowledged the Pope as supreme head of the Church.

The Poles had introduced their customs and institutions into Little Russia, and oppressed the people, who were mostly Cossack farmers.

In 1648 a Polish nobleman burned and pillaged the homestead of Bógdan Hmelnítski, the Cossack *Hetman*, who thereupon called the whole country to revolt. He made an alliance with the Crimean Tartars, and also got help from the Zaporogian Cossacks.¹ These were a community of freebooters—very like the Don Cossacks—who inhabited the banks and islands of the Dnieper, just below the rapids. They led a life of absolute freedom under their leaders, received only bachelors or widowers into their community, and had a code of honour of their own.

The peasants of the *Ukráina*,² as Little Russia was also called, and the Cossacks at first gained some successes against the Poles, but at the battle of Beréstechko the Tartar *Khan* treacherously deserted them, carrying Hmelnítski away as his prisoner. The Cossacks then fled under cover of the darkness, leaving the wretched peasants to be massacred by the Poles.

Soon after this Hmelnítski succeeded in buying himself free, and called a council at Pereyasláv, at

¹ The Cossacks from beyond the rapids.

² or Borderland.

which he proposed that the Little Russians should send messengers to Moscow begging Alexéi Mikháilovich to take them under his protection.

In 1653, Alexéi called a meeting of the *Zémski Sobór* to discuss this important matter, and, as the *Sobór* voted in favour of the annexation, sent a deputy to receive the allegiance of the Little Russians.

A war then began against the Poles, and was carried on with varying success for several years, terminating at last in the peace of Andrusóvo (1667), by which Little Russia was divided, and Alexéi kept the left bank of the Dnieper, and the Poles retained the right bank, but permanently ceded Smolénsk to Russia. Kiev was to belong to Russia for only two years, but it was never again restored to Poland.

It was in the reign of Alexéi Mikháilovich that the great 'schism' took place in the Russian Church. At that time Nikón, a man of remarkable enlightenment and power, was Patriarch. He found that many errors had, in the course of time, crept into the service books, so he had them re-translated from the Greek originals, and ordered this new version to be used in the churches. This caused much dissatisfaction, and a large proportion of the clergy and people seceded from the Church and retained the old form of ritual. These received the name of 'Old Believers' or 'Schismatics' (*Raskólniki*), and they are still numerous in Russia.

Alexéi Mikháilovich was very fond of Nikón, and was himself deeply religious. He was considered the best-read man of his time, and did all he could for the advancement of his people.

Alexéi had two sons, Feódor and Ivan, and several daughters, by his first wife. A few years before his death, which occurred in 1676, he married Natalia Narýshkina, a ward of the *boyar* Matvéyev, and by her he had a little son, Peter.

Alexéi introduced some innovations into the court life of Moscow, had his daughters educated, and allowed them to watch theatrical performances, and appear in public unveiled, instead of keeping them in seclusion.

CHAPTER XV

FEÓDOR ALEXÉYEVICH¹, 1676-82

IVAN V, 1682-96

PETER I, THE GREAT, 1682-1725

AFTER Alexéi's death, his eldest son, Feódor, succeeded him. He was a good, clever man, but quite an invalid, and only reigned six years. He died in 1682, leaving no children.

On his death the *boyars* were uncertain whom to appoint as his successor, for his brother, Ivan, was feeble both in mind and body, and Peter was a child.

While the *boyars* were deliberating, the Patriarch Joachim addressed the people assembled before the palace and asked them which of the princes they

¹ Alexis' son.

would have as Tsar. The people called for Peter, and as Ivan had no desire to reign Peter was proclaimed, and his mother and her relations, the Narýshkins, became all-powerful at court. This exasperated the Princess Sophia, Alexéi's daughter by his first wife, who was a very clever, ambitious woman. Had her feeble-minded brother, Ivan, been elected, she would practically have ruled Russia, and she determined to make a bid for power. She and her kinsmen, the Miloslávskis, bribed the *Stréltsy* with presents, and stirred them up to revolt by falsely accusing the Narýshkins of having smothered Ivan.

The *Stréltsy* rose in a body and rushed to the *Kremlin*, but Natalia Narýshkina appeared at a window with both princes, and when they found Ivan unharmed they quieted down and wished to return to their homes. Unfortunately at that moment their commander, the *boyar* Dolgorúki, rode up and berated them for their mutinous conduct, and this so incensed them that they broke into open riot, and after terrorizing the town for three days insisted on both princes being crowned together, and on Princess Sophia being regent during Peter's minority.

Sophia thus gained her point, and governed the country with great ability for seven years. Peter meanwhile lived with his mother in the palace of Preobrazhénskoye,¹ a village three miles from

¹ The (village of the) Transfiguration.

Moscow. He gathered round him all the village boys of Preobrazhenskoye, and the next village, Seménovskoye, and formed them into an army for playing at soldiers. With these boys he made miniature fortresses, which he besieged and defended, and led make-believe campaigns against the surrounding villages. When he grew up, these playmates of his formed the 1st and 2nd, or Preobrazhénski and Seménovski regiments of the Guards.

The so-called 'German quarter', where all the foreigners who had settled in Moscow lived, was quite near Preobrazhenskoye, and Peter was very fond of going there and spending long hours with the foreigners. Many of these men gave him lessons, or helped him in his games, and later on one of them, Lefort, a Genevese, became his chief adviser. One day Peter discovered an old English-built boat in a lumber-shed, had it mended, and launched it on the River Yáuza. After this he devoted much time to sailing, and built a small fleet of boats, which he kept on a lake near Moscow.

Peter was a very clever, intelligent boy, with a great thirst for knowledge and an enormous capacity for hard work. When he was seventeen he was married to Eudoxia Lopukhiná, and began to take a more active part in the management of State affairs.

Sophia realized that her influence was on the wane, and determined to retain her power. One night Peter was awakened by two *Stréltsy*, who had

galloped to Preobrazhenskoye to tell him that Sophia was inciting the *Stréltsy* to rebellion and had made a plot to kill him. Peter at once fled to Troitsa, ordering his wife and his mother to follow him under escort of the Preobrazhénski and Seménovski Guards. From Troitsa he sent an order to the *Stréltsy*, commanding them to leave Moscow and join him. Contrary to Sophia's expectations, the *Stréltsy*, with very few exceptions, obeyed this order, and Peter shortly returned to Moscow at the head of his troops. He then deposed Sophia from the regency, forced her to take the veil, and had her chief supporters executed (A. D. 1689).

Ivan V continued to bear the title of Tsar until his death, but Peter now reigned independently.

Peter was very anxious to see the sea, and undertook a journey to Archangel (which was visited every summer by English and Dutch vessels) in order to become better acquainted with ships and shipbuilding.

He then equipped an expedition against the Turkish fortress of Azov, which commanded the sea of that name. This first campaign was unfortunate, for Azov was protected by Turkish ships and could draw supplies from the fleet, but Peter returned to Russia and built a flotilla of boats, with which he sailed down the Don. In the following year he again laid siege to Azov, both by land and sea, and captured it in 1695.

On his return from the siege of Azov, Peter

determined to send an embassy to all the European courts, and himself travelled *incognito* in its train. He went first to Germany, where he left his ambassador Lefort to proceed ceremoniously onward, and himself visited towns, fortresses, and factories, studying everything most minutely. He then went to Holland, where he visited the great shipyards, and gained a practical knowledge of shipbuilding by working as a ship's carpenter on the wharves of Saardam.

Peter then went on to London and Vienna, where he received news of a revolt of the *Stréltzy*, and hastened back to Moscow.

The revolt had been quelled and the ringleaders executed before his return, but Peter took the opportunity of suppressing the *Stréltzy* altogether and replacing them by regular soldiery, receiving fixed pay, and trained in the German way.

After his return from abroad, Peter determined to bring Russia into line with the rest of Europe, and introduced many innovations, some of which proved extremely unpopular. Thus he forbade his subjects to wear the flowing beards and voluminous garments they affected, and made them wear French coats and full-bottomed wigs. The *boyars* were ordered to take their wives and daughters to balls and theatres, instead of keeping them in almost conventual seclusion, but this was considered most unseemly and gained Peter many enemies.

Peter did much to reform the internal organiza-

tion of the State, and replaced the *Boyárskaya Dúma*, or council of the *boyars*, by the Senate, a body composed only of the highest dignitaries, and which constituted the highest court of the kingdom.

The Patriarchate of Moscow was abolished on the death of the Patriarch Adrian, and the supreme control of Church matters was given over to the Holy Synod, a council of bishops.

A great many new schools were established, and no gentleman was allowed to marry unless he knew reading, writing, and arithmetic. Young men were encouraged to go abroad to complete their studies, and Peter was particularly anxious to encourage trade and manufactures in the country.

The dream of Peter's life was to obtain harbours on the Baltic, so in 1700 he entered into an alliance with Denmark and Poland and declared war on Charles XII of Sweden.

The Swedes opened the campaign by a sudden attack on Copenhagen, and soon forced Denmark to retire from her alliance with Russia, and then Charles turned his attention to the banks of the Neva. Here Peter was besieging Narva with a huge army of raw recruits, and Charles with his experienced soldiers easily defeated them, raised the siege of Narva and forced Peter to retire, leaving his artillery behind. Thinking he had thus broken Peter's power, Charles then attacked Augustus II, and spent several years fighting in Poland.

Peter meanwhile set about training his soldiers and making guns out of church bells, and in 1703 again commenced operations on the Gulf of Finland. He took Schlüsselburg and Nienshants, two Swedish fortresses, and built the fortress of SS. Peter and Paul on a small island of the Neva. On the marshy banks of the river opposite this fortress he founded St. Petersburg,¹ which he called the new capital of Russia. He also established a shipyard on the River Svir, and began building ships for use against the Swedes.

Charles XII had by this time dethroned Augustus II and set Stanislas Leszczynski on the throne of Poland, and was now able to attack Peter from the southwest. Mazeppa, the *Hetman* of Little Russia, who was entirely trusted by Peter, turned traitor and joined Charles with most of his Cossacks. This was a great blow to Peter, but, nothing daunted, he marched his army into the southern steppes, and in a pitched battle at Poltáva (A. D. 1709) completely defeated the Swedes. Their whole army surrendered, and Charles and Mazeppa sought safety in Turkey. There they persuaded the Sultan to make war on Russia. Hearing of this, Peter at once entered Moldavia, but was obliged to turn back for want of supplies, and was surrounded by the Turkish and Tartar armies on the banks of the Prut. He concluded a treaty, however, with the Grand Vizier,

¹ At the time of the Great War in 1914 this city was re-named Petrograd.

and was allowed to retire with military honours, on condition that he gave up Azov.

On the shores of the Baltic, Peter carried on the war very successfully, and gradually made himself master of the whole country. The war was brought to a close, 1721, by the Peace of Nystaedt, by which the whole of Livonia, Esthonia, Ingria, and part of Finland were ceded to Russia. After this, Peter adopted the title of Emperor, and was surnamed the Great.

Peter did not care for his first wife, Eudoxia—by whom he had one son, Alexéi—so he placed her in a convent, and made her take the veil. A few years later, at the siege of Marienburg in Livonia, he took prisoner a beautiful servant girl, called Martha Skavrónskaya. He afterwards married her and made her empress, under the name of Catharine, which she adopted when she joined the Greek Church. By her he had two daughters, Anna and Elizabeth.

Peter and his son were not on good terms, for Alexéi opposed his father's reforms, and the quarrels between them reached such a pitch that the prince went abroad for a time. On his return to Russia, Peter threw him into prison, where he died, leaving a little son, Peter.

Peter the Great died in 1725, from the effects of a severe cold he took while saving some soldiers from a vessel that had foundered near St. Petersburg.

He knew how to surround himself with able men who were perfectly devoted to him and furthered all his plans. His greatest favourite was Prince Ménshikov, who had begun life as a pie-man, but through his brilliant capacities came to fill the highest offices of State.

CHAPTER XVI

CATHARINE I, 1725-7

PETER II, 1627-1730

ANNE, 1730-40

PETER THE GREAT had not appointed his successor, but the direct heir to the throne was his grandson, Peter. He was, however, only ten years old, so the Empress Catharine, by the help of the Guards, ascended the throne and ruled for two years, with Ménshikov as her minister plenipotentiary. At her death she bequeathed the throne to Peter II, but during his minority vested the management of the State in the 'Supreme Privy Council', which she formed from among the highest officials under the presidency of Ménshikov.

Ménshikov at once assumed the greatest authority, betrothed his daughter to the young emperor, treated the nobility most arrogantly, and generally misused his power for his own ends. This conduct raised many enemies against him, notably Ostermann, Peter II's tutor, and the Princess Dolgorú-kaya, and brought about his fall. He was deprived

of all his honours and possessions, and was with his family exiled to Berézov in Siberia, where he died.

At thirteen Peter II declared himself of age, and went to live in Moscow, where, to the despair of Ostermann, he spent all his time in hunting. In 1730 he died of small-pox.

With Peter II the male line of the Románovs came to an end, and the dynasty could only be carried on in the female line. Peter the Great's eldest daughter, Anne, Duchess of Holstein, had died, leaving a little son, so the nearest heir to the throne was Peter's second daughter, Elizabeth.

The Supreme Privy Council, however, overlooked her claim, and elected Anne, second daughter of Ivan V, to be empress, on condition that the power of the throne should be limited, and that she should rule under the guidance of the Privy Council.

When Anne came to Moscow for her coronation, the nobles presented a petition to her begging her to restore absolute monarchy in Russia, and she crowned *herself*, as the custom had been, and is to this day. After this the Supreme Privy Council was abolished.

In the reign of Anne the most important offices were filled by Germans. Foreign affairs were entrusted to Ostermann, the army to Minikh¹, but the supreme control was held by Anne's favourite, Biron, who enjoyed absolute power, and cleverly succeeded in retaining her lifelong favour.

¹ The Russian form of the German name München.



ELIZABETH

1741-61

Anne carried on two wars, one to promote the accession of Augustus III to the throne of Poland, and the other against the Crimean Tartars—but both campaigns were unimportant in their results.

St. Petersburg again became the residence of the empress, and she gathered a very brilliant, pleasure-loving court around her. She married her niece Anne (daughter of her dead sister, and granddaughter of Ivan V) to the Duke of Brunswick, and when their infant son, Ivan, was born, appointed him to succeed her.

Anne died in 1740.

CHAPTER XVII

IVAN VI, 1740-1

ELIZABETH, 1741-61

PETER III, 1761-2

IVAN VI was only a few weeks old when the Empress Anne died, but she had appointed Biron to be regent during his minority. Biron's many enemies, however, rose against him, and under the leadership of Minikh arrested him, and sent him to the fortress of Schlüsselburg, and then to Siberia.

The Duchess of Brunswick was appointed regent, with Minikh and Ostermann as her chief advisers, but she was a foolish, incapable woman, and soon made enemies of all her followers.

The Princess Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the

Great, took advantage of the duchess's unpopularity to seize the throne by the help of the Guards, whom she roused to enthusiasm by a stirring speech, which she ended by the words: 'You know whose daughter I am!' The Duchess of Brunswick and her husband were exiled to Holmogóry, and little Ivan VI was shut up in Schlüsselburg for life (1741).

Elizabeth's first act was to remove Minikh and Ostermann from power and exile them to Siberia, and their fall marked the decline of the German influence at court. Elizabeth's favourites were all Russians. The first of these was Count Razumóvski, who had been a singer, but he was an easy-going man, who did not interfere at all in public matters. Elizabeth's second adviser was Shuválov, a man of great talent and education, who did a great deal for the enlightenment of the people. He founded the University of Moscow, the first university in Russia.

The foreign policy of Elizabeth's reign was marked by her alliance with Maria Theresa in the Seven Years' War, and the Russians under Soltykóv, Apráxin, and others gained several victories over the Prussians.

Elizabeth died in 1761.

She had appointed her nephew, Peter, Duke of Holstein, to be her successor, and had the young prince educated at her own court.

In 1745 he was married to a princess of Anhalt-Zerbst, a small German principality, who upon



CATHARINE II (THE GREAT)

1762-96

joining the Greek Church took the name of Catharine. Although this princess was only fourteen, she was remarkably clever and energetic, and at once set herself to study not only the Russian language, but the history, literature, and customs of the country. She even wrote several plays, poems, and historical and philosophical essays.

On the death of Elizabeth, Peter III ascended the throne, but he was weak and incapable, and was very soon made to give up his power to his clever wife, who thus became empress in her own right. Peter III died a few months later, in 1762.

CHAPTER XVIII

CATHARINE II, 1762-96

THE reign of Catharine II was one of the most glorious in Russian history, and during this period the boundaries of the empire were very much enlarged. Catharine carried on two very successful wars against the Turks, which ended in firmly establishing Russian rule on the shores of the Black Sea.

In the first war, Count Rummyantsov entered Moldavia, defeated the Turks in the battles of Larga and Kagul, and, pursuing his advantage, crossed to the right bank of the Danube. The Russian fleet, under Admiral Orlov, at the same time sailed round Europe, attacked the Turkish

fleet in the straits of Chios, and burnt it in the little bay of Chesma. The Turks at last sued for peace, which was concluded at Kuchuk Kainarji in 1774, and by the terms of which Turkey ceded to Russia the mouths of the Don and Dnieper, Azov, and several smaller towns, and four and a half million roubles.

About the year 1770 a dangerous rebellion broke out in the eastern provinces of Russia, and it took five years of incessant fighting to put it down.

A Don Cossack, Emelian Pugachév by name, gave himself out to be the Emperor Peter III, and gained a large following among the Urál Cossacks by declaring that he would stand for the people against the nobles. He was joined by the Kirghiz, Kalmuks, and other wandering tribes, and possessed himself of several forts and outposts. Catharine sent a small army against him under General Carr, who was, however, defeated by Pugachév. His successor, Bíbikov, acted with great energy, and sent a flying column under Colonel Michelson to harry the rebels incessantly. Pugachév received his first check near Orenburg, but soon recovered, reappeared on the Volga, and pillaged and burnt Kazan. There Michelson came up with him, and defeated him. Pugachév then turned southward along the Volga, took Sarátov, and followed the river to Tsarítsyn and Astrakhan, ever pursued by Michelson and his hussars. At this crisis, Suvórov, Catharine's greatest general, took command and

succeeded in driving Pugachév across the Volga into the steppes, and forced the Cossacks to give him up. Pugachév was brought to Moscow in a cage, and was hanged and quartered in 1775.

Catharine's chief adviser was Potémkin. He was the son of a poor nobleman, but by his wonderful ability brought himself to Catharine's notice, and gained rapid promotion during the first Turkish war. After the Peace of Kainarji, he was made Governor of the newly-acquired provinces, which were very fertile but quite uncultivated. In a very few years he did wonders in developing the country by encouraging settlers to come there, building towns and clearing the district of the Zaporogian freebooters.

In 1783 he obtained the annexation of the Crimea, and thus put an end to the kingdom of the Crimean Tartars who had made such frequent inroads into Russia.

The Turks very much resented the annexation of the Crimea, and in 1788 began the second war with Russia. Catharine, however, entered into an alliance with the Emperor Joseph II, and appointed Potémkin to be commander-in-chief.

He laid siege to the Turkish fortress of Ochákov, which was stormed and taken after a stubborn resistance in 1788.

The celebrated general Suvórov met the Turks in a battle near Rymnik in Moldavia, and defeated them. The most important event of the war

was the siege of Izmail, a first-class fortress on the banks of the Danube. Potémkin laid siege to it, but the Turks defended it most gallantly. Potémkin then gave over the supreme command to Suvórov, with instructions to take the fortress at any price. After a desperate resistance, it was stormed in 1790. About this time Catharine's faithful ally, the Emperor Joseph II, died, and England and France used their diplomatic influence in favour of Turkey, so negotiations were opened, and peace was concluded at Jassy in 1791.

Potémkin did not live to see the end of the war, but died of fever early in 1791.

The reign of Catharine saw the dismemberment of the kingdom of Poland—a result of its internal dissensions. Poland was an electoral monarchy, and the death of every king occasioned a fierce struggle for the throne. Religious differences between the Roman Catholics, Greek Catholics, and Protestants—or Dissenters as they were called—and quarrels between the nobles and their serfs, further weakened the power of the State and made it an easy prey to its greedy neighbours.

On plea of defending the Greek Catholics, who demanded equal civil rights with the Roman Catholics, Catharine sent an army under Suvórov into Poland, and Frederick II did the same to protect the interests of the Protestants.

A struggle ensued which lasted four years, and was brought to a close in 1772 by the first partition

of Poland, by which Russia annexed White Russia ; Austria, Galicia ; and Prussia, Pomerania.

Twenty years later, a further partition of Poland between Prussia and Russia took place, but this so exasperated the Poles that, under Kosciúszko, they rose in rebellion and massacred the Russian garrison of Warsaw. Catharine again sent Suvórov to Poland, and Kosciúszko was completely defeated, and taken prisoner at Maciejowíce, near Warsaw. Upon this Warsaw surrendered, and the kingdom of Poland was practically abolished in 1795 by a third partition, in which Russia received as her share Volynia, Lithuania, and Courland, and the Polish king, Stanislas Poniatowski, was removed to St. Petersburg.

In the management of internal affairs, Catharine showed great wisdom. She divided the country into fifty governments, which were again subdivided into districts, each of which had its own law-courts and administration. The towns were given municipal government under their mayors. The nobility had their privileges confirmed by patents of nobility, and were exempted from corporal punishment.

The monasteries had, in the course of time, and through the generosity of their patrons, come to possess vast tracts of land and thousands of serfs, which they held quite free of taxation, but Catharine ordered these lands to be appropriated to the Treasury.

Catharine was a great lover of royal progresses through the empire, and in this way became well acquainted with the country, which she endeavoured to open up by having good roads made between the principal towns.

Catharine was surnamed the Great. She died of apoplexy in 1796, and was succeeded by her son, Paul I.

CHAPTER XIX

PAUL I, 1796-1801

CATHARINE II had never shown any affection for her son, nor allowed him to take a prominent place at court, so until his accession to the throne he and his wife had lived very quietly in the palace at Gáchino. He had spent most of his time in superintending military exercises and manœuvres, for his great desire was to organize the Russian army on Prussian lines.

When Paul became emperor he joined the alliance England and Austria had formed against the French, and in 1799 sent an army into Italy. Suvórov was appointed to the supreme command of the allied armies. He defeated the French in a series of desperate battles at Adda, Trebbio, and Novi, and then undertook the hazardous passage of the Alps.

A body of Russian troops under Rímski-Kórsakov was already fighting in Switzerland, and Suvórov's aim was to join forces and drive the French out of

Switzerland. He crossed the St. Gothard Pass amid great dangers, and after severe fighting in the Gorge of Ursern and at the Devil's Bridge, reached Mutten. Here he learnt that Kórsakov had been defeated by the French at Zurich, and had fallen back on Schaffhausen. In the face of tremendous odds, he then fought his way through to the valley of the Rhine, and joined Kórsakov at Feldkirchen.

The Russian army took up winter quarters in Bohemia, but early in 1800 Paul withdrew from his alliance with England and Austria, and made peace with France.

The army was recalled to Russia, but Suvórov was already ill when he commenced his homeward journey, and died soon after his arrival in St. Petersburg.

The chief act of Paul's reign was the introduction of a measure by which the serfs were only required to work for their masters on three days of the week.

Paul had a peculiar, unbalanced mind, and a despotic way of enforcing his reforms, which made him many enemies. His intentions were good, but his methods were arbitrary and so erratic that he was often thought to be insane.

He was murdered in a palace revolt in 1801, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Alexander.

CHAPTER XX

ALEXANDER I, 1801-25

ALEXANDER I had been Catharine the Great's favourite grandson, and was a man of great talent and wonderful personal charm. His first care was to reform the old system of administration by departments or offices, where business was hopelessly delayed, and to establish Ministries for War, Foreign Affairs, Public Instruction, &c., each with a chancellery of its own.

In the early part of Alexander's reign there was a war against Sweden, the most important event of which was the crossing of the Gulf of Bothnia on the ice, by a Russian army under Barclay de Tolly. Peace was concluded in 1809.

The result of this campaign was that Finland voluntarily gave herself up to Russia on condition that she should retain her own administration and all her old rights and privileges (A.D. 1809).

Alexander I allied himself with Austria, and then with Prussia, against the French, but Napoleon defeated them at Austerlitz and Friedland, and peace was concluded at Tilsit in 1807. This peace was signed on a barge anchored in mid-stream of the Niemen, in view of both armies, but it did not prove lasting.

Napoleon continued his conquests in Germany, and conceived the idea of subduing Russia. In

June 1812 he crossed the Russian frontier and began his march on Moscow.

Alexander went to Moscow, and there issued a manifesto to his people calling them to arms against the invader. The people responded with enthusiasm, and all classes of society prepared to defend the country.

The Russian commander-in-chief, Barclay de Tolly, was meanwhile retreating before Napoleon, with the object of drawing the French army deeper and deeper into the country. He reached Smolénsk without giving battle, but determined to defend the town. It was besieged by Napoleon, but the town caught fire and was evacuated by the Russians, and nothing but charred embers fell into the hands of the French.

Barclay de Tolly's policy caused much dissatisfaction in the Russian army, and Alexander appointed Prince Goleníshchev-Kutúzov to supersede him.

It was expected that Kutúzov would at once attack the French, but he also adopted de Tolly's plan and retired to within a hundred and eight versts of Moscow. Here, on the field of Borodinó, was fought one of the most bloody battles of modern times. It waged all day, and although at nightfall Kutúzov kept the advantage of position, his losses were so enormous that under cover of the darkness, he recommenced his retreat on Moscow.

Three days later, a council of war was held in the village of Fili, and it was decided that the Russian

army should retire through Moscow, without defending the city. Next day Napoleon entered Moscow unopposed, but all the shutters were up, and the city was almost deserted.

A general exodus had begun as soon as Napoleon passed Smolénsk, and most of the treasures of the city had been sent away. In all, perhaps ten thousand of the very poorest inhabitants alone remained in the city. The Governor, Count Rostópchin, had sent the fire engines to Vladímir, and after unlocking the jails and letting out the prisoners, had ordered them to set fire to the town as soon as the French entered it.

On September 3, Napoleon took up his quarters in the *Kremlin* Palace, but by next day Moscow was a sea of flame, and he was obliged to leave the *Kremlin* and go to the Petróvski Palace.

When the conflagration subsided, the French soon found themselves almost destitute of supplies, and all attempts to bring provisions into the town were frustrated by the bands of armed peasants, who hung on the outskirts of the town ever ready to capture foraging parties and cut off stragglers. These armed peasants were called *Rátniki* or Partisans.

Napoleon stayed five weeks in Moscow, and then a spell of intensely cold weather decided him to commence his retreat.

Before leaving Moscow he ordered mines to be laid under the *Kremlin* walls, and the palace and

all public buildings to be burnt. During the night parts of the walls were blown up, and the barracks and palace burnt to the ground, but the churches of the *Kremlin* were happily saved.

Napoleon began his retreat along the Serpukhóv and Kalúga roads towards Smolénsk, but Kutúzov's army and the Partisans continually harassed him in the rear.

The cold and hardships of a Russian winter soon relaxed all discipline in the French army; orderly retreat soon developed into a complete rout, and Napoleon himself narrowly escaped being made prisoner at the awful crossing of the River Berezina. The line of retreat of the 'Grand Army' was marked by thousands of corpses, and before reaching Vilna Napoleon left the sorry remains of his legions and hastened to Paris alone.

After Napoleon's defeat, Alexander again entered into an alliance with Austria and Prussia, and the results of their combined actions were the occupation of Paris in 1814, and the fall of Napoleon. In the following year European peace was restored by the Congress of Vienna, which also finally ratified the annexation by Russia of the Polish provinces under the title of 'the Kingdom of Poland'.

During the last years of his life, Alexander made several journeys to different parts of the Empire.

In 1825 his wife, the Empress Elizabeth, was ordered by her doctors to spend the winter in

a warmer climate. Alexander accompanied her to Taganróg, on the Sea of Azov, and then went on a tour in the Crimea.

He caught a chill while travelling, and died soon after his return to Taganróg, November 19, 1825.

CHAPTER XXI

NICHOLAS I, 1825-55

ALEXANDER I died childless, and Russia took the oath to his brother Constantine, who was Viceroy of Poland, and lived in Warsaw. A proclamation was, however, at once issued, declaring that Constantine had refused the throne in favour of his younger brother, Nicholas.

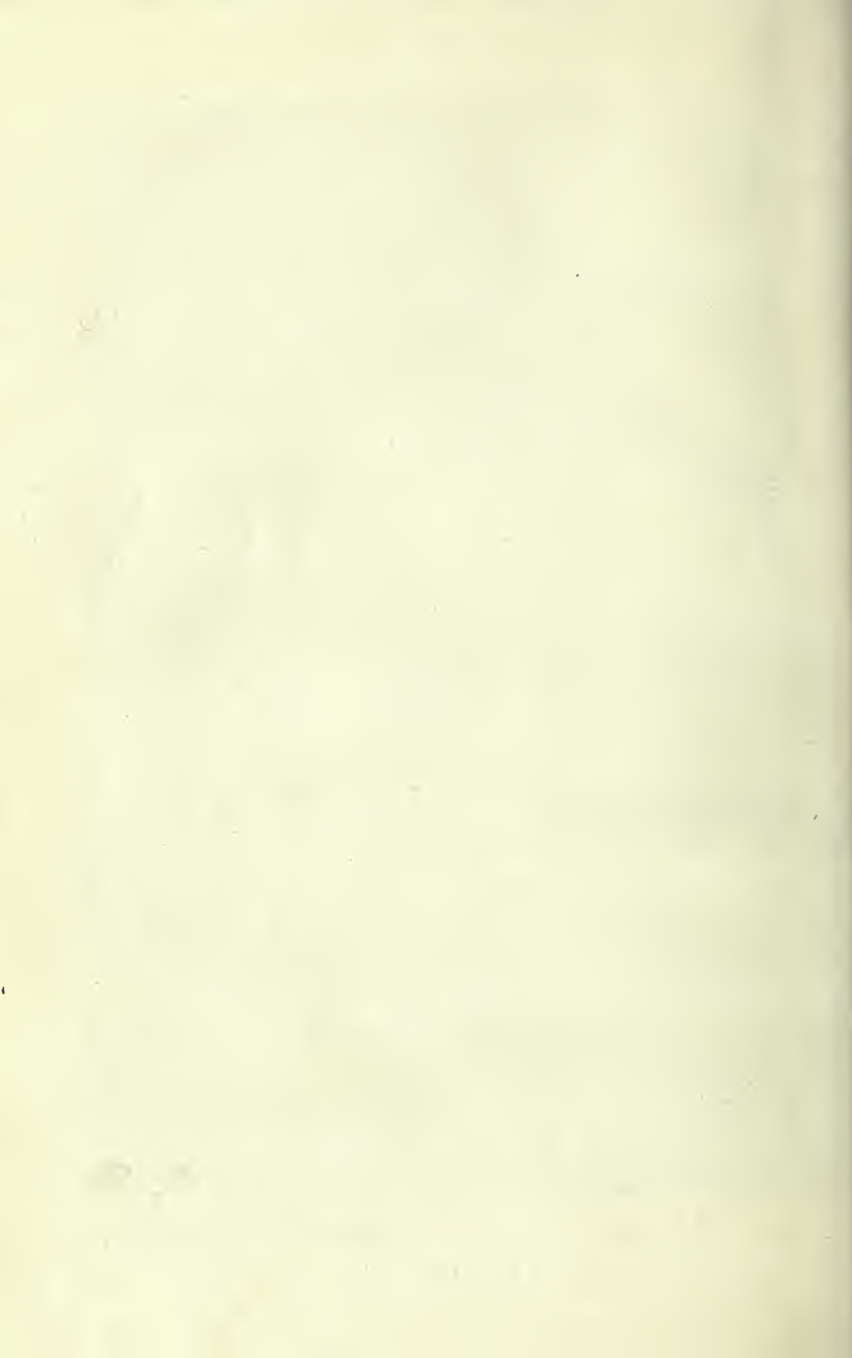
This brought about the 'Decabrist' (or December) conspiracy among a few officers of the Guards, who wished to force Constantine on to the throne by means of a military revolt, but this conspiracy was very soon suppressed by Nicholas I, who was a man of strong character and great energy.

During the reign of Nicholas, Russia was involved in many wars, the first of which was against Persia.

In the time of Paul I, Georgia, a Christian kingdom in the Caucasus, had voluntarily given itself up to the Russian crown, but it was separated from Russia by a rugged mountain region, where warlike hill-men, encouraged by Persia, kept up a continual warfare.



CATHEDRAL CHURCH OF THE SAVIOUR (XIX c.)
MOSCOW



In 1813 the Shah of Persia had, at last, been forced to give up his claims on Georgia, but at the time of Nicholas's accession he attempted to reconquer the country.

Nicholas at once sent an army under General Paskévich to protect the Georgians. Paskévich defeated the Persians, took the fortress of Eriván, and was already on his way to the Persian capital when the Shah sued for peace (A.D. 1828). Persia gave up two Khanates to Russia and paid a large indemnity.

In 1828 Russia joined England and France in an alliance to promote the liberation of Greece, and the Russian Black Sea fleet took part in the battle of Navarino, where the whole Turkish fleet was destroyed.

Nicholas meanwhile divided the Russian army into two parts. One of them operated in Asiatic Turkey under Paskévich 'Erivánski', and took the fortresses of Kars and Akhaltsykh, while the other, under the Emperor himself, attacked Varna. This fortress and several others were captured, and the Russian army, under Díbich, crossed the Balkans and occupied Adrianople.

With the enemy within two days' march of his capital, the Sultan thought it advisable to make overtures of peace, and it was concluded at Adrianople in 1829. By this peace Russia obtained the mouth of the Danubé, the eastern shores of the Black Sea, and several Asiatic fortresses.

In 1830 the Poles, who bitterly resented Russian rule, broke out in rebellion and attempted to restore the kingdom of Poland. The whole country rose in arms, and Nicholas had to send a powerful force into Poland. Díbich defeated the insurgents in the battle of Gróhovo, in which their commander-in-chief, Chlopícki, was mortally wounded; but even this did not end the rebellion. As usual, however, quarrels and dissensions arose among the Poles and prevented their opposing the advance of the Russians on Warsaw, which was stormed by Paskévich in 1831. This proved the death-blow to the rebellion, and Poland was incorporated with Russia.

During the period of peace which followed the suppression of the Polish rebellion, Nicholas turned his attention to the internal affairs of the country, and in 1833 had the 'Code of Laws' drawn up under the guidance of Speránski.

Nicholas also very much developed the naval and military resources of the country, and was almost a martinet for discipline.

In 1853 war again broke out with the Turks, who had encroached on the privileges of the Greek Church in the Holy Land, and refused to restore the rights granted to Russian pilgrims in Palestine.

A Russian army, under Gorchakóv, at once occupied Moldavia and Wallachia, while the Black Sea fleet destroyed the Turkish fleet in the harbour of Sinope.

England, France, and Sardinia embraced the

cause of Turkey, and sent their fleets to the Black Sea. Thus began the Crimean War in 1854.

The allied armies landed at Eupatoria, in the Crimea, and turned southwards towards Sevastopol.

Prince Ménshikov, who commanded the Russian troops, tried to check their advance on the high banks of the River Alma, but after a fight which lasted several hours he was forced to fall back on Sevastopol.

This fortress, which was very strongly fortified towards the sea, had only very slight defences on the land side, and these were hastily reinforced, the inhabitants working side by side with the soldiers in throwing up earthworks and fortifying the town.

The Russian ships were sunk across the mouth of the harbour to block its entrance against the allied fleets, and the ships' guns were removed to the fortifications.

The allied armies laid siege to Sevastopol, and maintained it for eleven months, although Ménshikov's army made several attempts to raise it, notably by their attack on the English on the heights of Inkerman.

This war was a great strain on the resources of Russia, especially when the allied fleets appeared in the Baltic and bombarded the fortress of Sveaborg, off Helsingfors.

The absence of railways made the supplying of

the Russian army overland a work of great difficulty, while the allies could get all they wanted by sea.

In the midst of the Crimean War, the Emperor Nicholas I died suddenly at St. Petersburg, in February 1855, and was succeeded by his son, Alexander II.

CHAPTER XXII

ALEXANDER II, 1855-81

THE siege of Sevastopol went on until the end of August 1855, when the garrison began to run short of ammunition, and the Malakhóv bastion, which was the key to Sevastopol, was stormed by the allies. The fall of Sevastopol practically put an end to operations in the Crimea, but three months later the Russians reduced the Turkish fortress of Kars by hunger.

Both Alexander II and the allies were, by this time, quite willing to make peace, and it was concluded at Paris in 1856.

By the provisions of the Treaty of Paris, all the conquests of the war were returned to their former owners, but Turkey, in addition, received from Russia the mouth of the Danube, and prohibited the passage of the Dardanelles to the Russian fleet.

The most important event of Alexander II's reign was the abolition of serfdom.

Both Catharine II and Alexander I had wished

to do this, but the project had never been realized, and when Alexander II came to the throne there were over 22,000,000 serfs in Russia.

On February 19, 1861, Alexander abolished serfdom, and the peasants had land allotted to them, which they were to redeem from the landowners at a fixed rate. This act was received with great enthusiasm by the people, and gained Alexander the title of 'the Liberator'.

Alexander brought in many reforms; thus in 1863 he placed the local management of governments and districts in the hands of the *Zémstvo*, a council elected from among the inhabitants, who were naturally better acquainted with local needs. He also introduced trial by jury in an open court, and abolished corporal punishment.

The Polish emigrants and insurgents of 1830 had been granted an amnesty by Alexander II, and had been allowed to return to their homes, but they merely took advantage of this to foster discontent in the country, and in 1863 another rebellion broke out.

Night attacks on the Russian soldiers were made simultaneously in many parts of Poland, and bands of armed insurgents spread all over the country. A guerilla warfare was carried on for several months, but then Muravév, the Russian viceroy in Vilna, ordered the Russian troops to take such radical measures that the rebellion was soon stamped out.

The conquest of the Caucasus had been going on

gradually but steadily since the beginning of the century, but the opposition of the mountain tribes became desperate when Shamil placed himself at the head of the movement. He was the chief of the Mohammedan sect of the Murids, and a sworn enemy to Russia. The hill-men made fierce raids on the Russian soldiers, and then retired to their mountain fastnesses, where they were safe from pursuit.

At last Alexander determined to put an end to this state of things, and appointed Prince Baryátinski to the command of the Caucasus.

Prince Baryátinski devoted all his attention to the Eastern Caucasus, where he made clearings in the forests and military roads. He then stormed Shamil's fortress of Veden, and drove him into the wilds of Daghestan. Here Shamil made a desperate stand in the hill-fort of Gunib, but the Russians stormed his position, and after some hours of fighting Shamil surrendered to Prince Baryátinski. This brought the whole of the Eastern Caucasus to Russia's feet, but the Western Caucasus had still to be conquered step by step, and was not finally subdued until 1864. Those of the hill-men who would not accept Russian rule emigrated to Turkey and Asia Minor.

The Christian inhabitants of the Balkan peninsula had for centuries been trying to throw off the dominion of Turkey, and Serbia had already become a separate principality. Bulgaria now showed similar

aspirations, and the Turks, to prevent a rising in the country, perpetrated the 'Bulgarian atrocities', a wholesale massacre in which thousands of Bulgarians were killed.

This called forth the intervention of Russia, who was considered the champion of the Slav nationalities.

In 1877 Alexander II declared war on Turkey, and sent his army, under his brother, the Grand Duke Nicholas Nikoláyevich, into Bulgaria.

The Turkish army had concentrated in that part of Bulgaria which surrounded the fortresses of Shumla, Varna, Rushchuk, and Silistria, and had strongly fortified the town of Plevna. This town the Russians, under General Skóbelev, besieged, and made several attempts to carry by storm, but they met with a most stubborn resistance.

When supplies began to run short, the Turks in Plevna, under Osman Pasha, made a desperate attempt to break through the Russian besieging force, but they were overpowered by numbers, and the whole of the Plevna garrison had to surrender.

The Russians, under General Gúrko, then made a winter march across the Balkans, in the face of great hardships, and again defeated the Turks at the Shipka Pass.

The Grand Duke Michael Nikoláyevich, another brother of the emperor, had command of the army operating in Asiatic Turkey, and with his generals, Loris Mélikov and Heyden, took Kars.

Once across the Balkans, the Russian army moved quickly forward, and occupied Adrianople without a struggle.

Turkey then sued for peace, which was concluded at San Stefano in February 1878, and later on ratified in Berlin. Russia received back the mouth of the Danube and the districts and fortresses of Kars and Batum. Montenegro, Serbia, and Roumania were acknowledged independent, and Bulgaria became a separate principality under the suzerainty of Turkey.

During the greater part of the nineteenth century, revolutionary and anarchistic ideas had gradually been developing and gaining ground in Russia, and had manifested themselves in several attempts on the life of the emperor, as the representative of the monarchical régime. These attempts were organized by a body of revolutionaries called the 'Nihilists', whose ringleaders mostly lived abroad.

The mass of the Russian people were, and are still, devotedly loyal to the throne, but the emissaries of the nihilists could always find hare-brained, hot-headed enthusiasts ready to be carried to any lengths by plausible lies.

On March 1, 1881, a bomb was thrown under the emperor's carriage as he was driving to the Winter Palace. He was mortally wounded by the explosion, and died an hour later. He was succeeded by his son, Alexander III.

CHAPTER XXIII

ALEXANDER III, 1881-1894

NICHOLAS II, 1894—

ALEXANDER III was the first Russian emperor to whom the peasants took the oath, for until the emancipation of the serfs it had been administered only to the upper and official classes.

His reign, which lasted for over thirteen years, was a period of peace for Russia, and Alexander III, through his personal influence, did much to maintain the peace of Europe.

In Central Asia, Russian power had been making great strides during the last years of the previous reign, and in 1878 the Emir of Bokhara had placed himself under Russian protection, an example which Samarkand and Merv soon followed.

Their submission was not obtained without some resistance on the part of the natives, but the *Khans* realized that Russia meant to subjugate them, and preferred submitting voluntarily, and thereby retaining their religious and tribal privileges. The advantages to be obtained from trade with Russia were a potent factor in the gradual russification of Central Asia.

In her dealings with Eastern countries Russia has invariably followed an astute policy of more or less peaceful occupation, ending in complete annexation, and thus the tables have been turned,

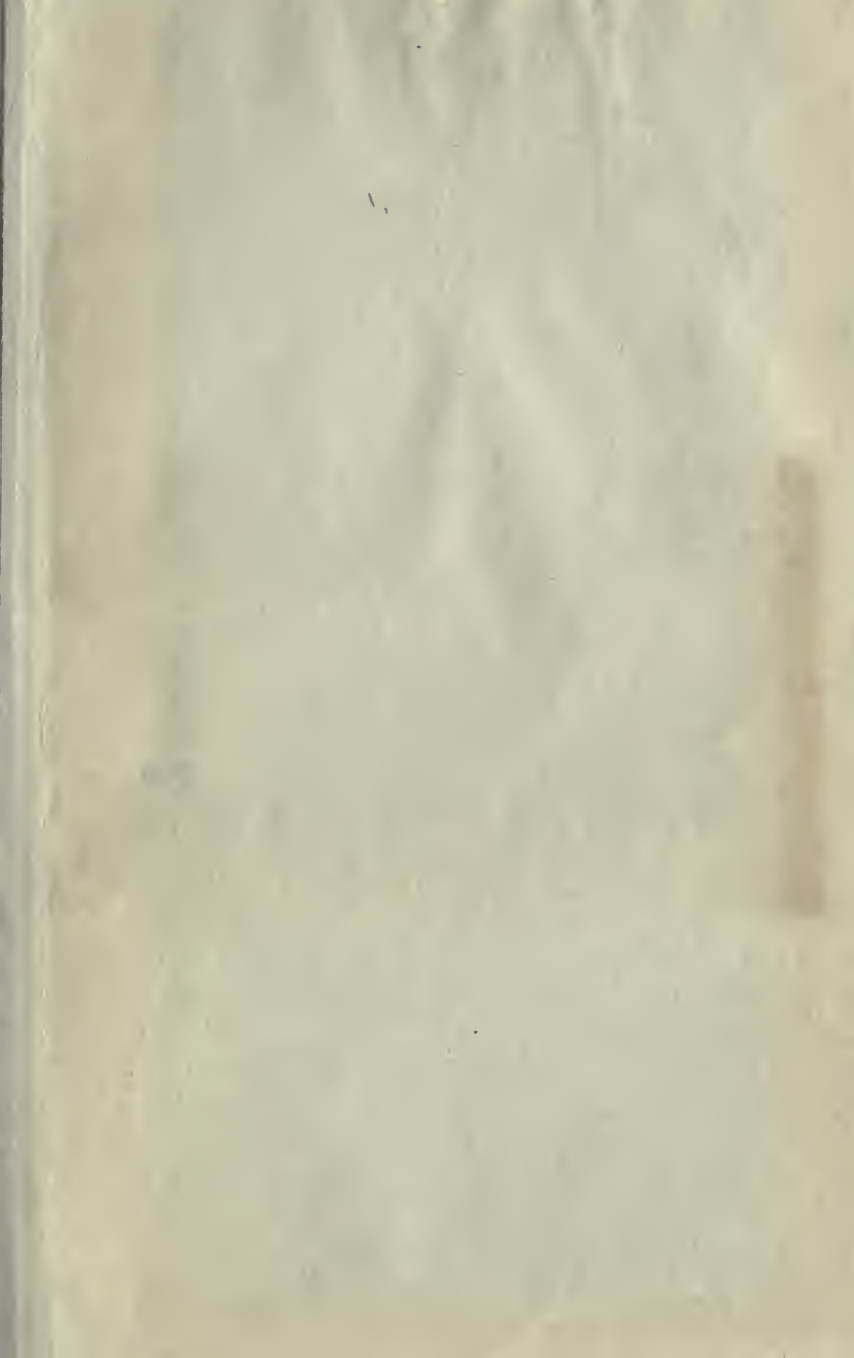
and the Mongol now has to submit to the Russian yoke.

Alexander III married the Princess Dagmar, daughter of the King of Denmark, who on joining the Greek Church took the name of Maria Feódorovna.

Alexander III died on October 20, 1894, and was succeeded by his eldest son, Nicholas.

Nicholas II married Princess Alix of Hesse-Darmstadt (who took the name of Alexandra Feódorovna), and has five daughters, and one son, Alexéi.

So far, the principal events of his reign have been : the opening of the Trans-Siberian Railway ; the somewhat disastrous war against Japan, 1904-5 ; the spread of the strike movement and the increase of terrorist acts ; the granting of the Russian Constitution by the manifesto of October 17, 1905 ; and the armed rising in Moscow and its suppression in December 1905 ; and the opening of the first State *Dúma* or Parliament on April 27, 1906.



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