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RUSSIA

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SLEDGING WITH THE "PRISTYAZHIKA," OR SIDE-HORSE

# RUSSIA

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*Sketch-Map of Russia at end of volume*

# ST. PETERSBURG

## CHAPTER I

### FIRST IMPRESSIONS

Characteristics—Spaciousness—Remoteness of St. Petersburg from other centres—Its surroundings—Approaches to St. Petersburg by land and water—Contrast with Germany.

IN starting to describe a foreign city, with which the author has long been perfectly familiar, probably the best method to adopt will be to recall his first impressions of it. Naturally, in the course of some thirty years the external character of St. Petersburg has undergone many changes. Every effort has been made, as far as concerns outward appearances, to place it as nearly as possible on a level with the great capitals of the West. Consequently, the visitor of to-day will not meet with as many survivals of the past as the author did when he first landed on the banks of the Neva. The alterations that have since been

made must be classed amongst improvements common to the development of all great cities of the present day. The foreign visitor, therefore, will find repeated many of the features of his own native capital. On the other hand, St. Petersburg exhibits features which are peculiarly its own, and which have remained unaltered not only for the last thirty years, but from its very foundation. A pretty good idea of these peculiarities of the city and its locality may perhaps be conveyed to the reader if the author points them out here in the light in which they first interested him many years ago.

His attention was first of all struck by the spaciousness of the place, the extensive scale on which the Imperial City had evidently been laid out, and the immense waste of land in which Peter the Great had planted his so-called 'Paradise.' The author could not help noticing the handsome appearance of the principal buildings and the extreme lowness of the geographical situation. There was also a look of relative emptiness about many of the large, open squares and wide, long thoroughfares, which at times seemed too big for the small number of inhabitants straggling through them. After London and Paris, there was some-



thing of the air of a provincial town in comparison, in some places, of an enormous village, although one of palaces and cathedrals. The largest buildings seemed dwarfed by the great open spaces surrounding them. The immediate neighbourhood of the celebrated St. Isaac Cathedral presented a striking contrast to that of St. Paul's, so disgracefully hemmed in by bricks and mortar on Ludgate Hill. The houses built round this magnificent Russian temple were kept at a most respectful distance from the very first. Two fine public gardens, one of which is quite a park, were subsequently laid out on two sides of it, and yet so much free space has been left all round the sacred edifice that a military review could be held in front of it without the least difficulty. In arrangement of streets it was easy to see that the town had not been left, so to speak, to make itself, but had been marked out on a regular plan of straight lines intersecting one another at more or less right angles. This plan is best seen on the Vassili Ostroff, the largest island of the Neva delta, and a very important part of St. Petersburg. The most peculiar feature of this district is the nomenclature of the streets. The inhabited area is divided into rectangular blocks of buildings, which form a series of parallel avenues

at right angles with the Nicholas Quay of the river. These avenues, or streets, have no separate names or numbers, as in New York, but each side of a street is called a 'line,' so that there are two lines in each street, and these lines are numbered 1 to 27. Cutting straight across them at considerable intervals of distance, and running parallel with the Quay, are three very long thoroughfares called the Big, Middle, and Little Prospects. This word 'prospect' is applied instead of street or road to many other main thoroughfares in all parts of the city, the most important of them all, of course, being the Nevsky Prospect. For the most part, this regularity of construction is disturbed only where rows of houses were made to follow the windings of natural streams, utilized to form the network of canals, which run through the southern part of the town.

Everything at first seemed to have an air of newness and modernity. The whiteness and light-coloured tints of the stuccoed fronts of houses, which never get black, thanks to the general use of wood fuel instead of coal, helped to strengthen this impression. There were no remains of antiquity. We should perhaps make an exception in this respect for the two Egyptian



EMPEROR AND EMPRESS IN ANCIENT DRESS

of the Tsar and Tsaritsa of the old Muscovite Empire, as worn at an historical costume ball in the palace



sphinxes, brought from ancient Thebes, and set up on the river quay, opposite the Imperial Academy of Fine Arts. These Egyptian relics occupy a similar position to that of Cleopatra's Needle on the Thames Embankment. Nothing outside of collections in museums and palaces dated back farther than the time of Peter the Great and the reign of Queen Anne in England. The author in his rambles came upon no eyesores in the form of congested slums, and there appeared to be no narrow, tortuous lanes and alleys, no obstructive blocks standing in the way of modern requirements. The city must have been projected with large ideas as to the future growth of its street traffic, and although this has greatly increased during the writer's experience, there is still ample accommodation for its further development. I believe there has been only one insignificant example of the widening of thoroughfares in St. Petersburg to meet the necessities of increasing traffic in the whole course of its history. This occurred recently, when two or three canal bridges were widened to give more room for the new electric trams.

When Peter the Great set about building St. Petersburg, he was not content to construct the

nucleus of it only in one particular spot, leaving its expansion to take place in the usual natural way. He had various establishments placed on both sides of the river at immense distances from each other. The Alexander Nevsky Monastery, for instance, was built at one end of the Nevsky Prospect, nearly three miles from the Admiralty at the other end, and it took more than a century to fill up the intervening space.

It has often been objected that St. Petersburg is so very remote from all other great centres of Russia, as well as from those of neighbouring countries generally. It stands far aloof from all other lines of communication, both in Russia and on the rest of the European continent. It lies on the road to nowhere in particular, except, perhaps, the Arctic Seas. So much has this been felt to be the case in recent years that the more direct railway routes from the Baltic to Moscow, and into the very heart of the country, have been assiduously exploited at the expense of the capital. In short, as far as regards land communication, St. Petersburg is situated at the most inconvenient and outlandish end of Russia that could possibly have been chosen for it. Peter the Great, who only hankered after 'sea power,' cared nothing for land



routes. Although he was only distantly, or scarcely at all, related to the Vikings, who founded the older Russian dynasty of the Ruriks, he nevertheless inherited and revived in a remarkable degree their peculiar predilection for boats and waterways. The inconveniences of this remoteness of St. Petersburg from the older centres of its own 'hinterland' has been referred to by the Russian writer Naryshkin in the following manner: 'A State which has its capital at one of its extremities is like an animal with its heart on one of its finger-tips, or its stomach on the end of one of its big toes.'

It may not be a matter of much consequence to-day, in view of the prospects of racing motors and our contempt for distance, and still less will it be so probably in the near future, when the airship comes into general use ; but one cannot help thinking that, had the Russian capital been placed in a somewhat more accessible position, it would have been better for the outside world as well as for Russia. No one is prepared to say where else it could have been put, but all seem to agree as to the inconvenience of its present position. It might have been more to the advantage of the inhabitants if Peter had begun to build a mile or two farther

up the river at Okhta, where he compelled the Swedes to leave off. On all sides of St. Petersburg there are no other towns of any importance for hundreds of miles, either on Russian territory proper, or across the Russo-Finnish frontier in its close vicinity. Tver is 300 miles and Moscow 400 miles south-eastward; Vilna, the former capital of Lithuania, is more than 400 miles south-westward; and Helsingfors, the capital of Finland, is nearly 300 miles to the north-west. If we turn due north, there is nothing in that direction but Archangel, another 600 or 700 miles away, and the North Pole. The nearer towns of Novgorod, Pskoff, and Narva, which were once of such great importance in Russian politics and trade, have long since sunk into provincial insignificance. They at one time carried on an extensive commerce with the western world, and in truth constituted Russia's real 'window into Europe' centuries before Peter the Great opened his window on the Neva. The first two centres of early Russian self-government, Novgorod and Pskoff, of famous memory, were crushed and reduced by Ivan the Terrible for the benefit and aggrandisement of Moscow. All three towns were subsequently superseded by Peter's new capital.







EASTER EVE

Priest blessing the first food after the Lenten fast outside a church on Easter Eve

St. Petersburg thus stands, comparatively speaking, in the midst of a wilderness, surrounded by swamps and forests. Many of these swamps are still indicated on detailed maps as 'Nicholas Bog,' 'Round Bog,' etc. Balakirieff, the Court jester of Peter the Great, described the position of his master's new capital in the following melancholy strain: '*Na odnoi storonye more na drougoi gore, na traitye mokh, na chetvertoi okh!*' (On one side the sea, on the other sorrow, on the third moss, on the fourth a sigh). At the same time, notwithstanding the lowness of the situation and unhealthy condition of the soil, a number of beautiful summer retreats are to be seen in the environs of St. Petersburg, many of them having been established for members of the Imperial Family. There are also villas of the aristocracy and wealthier citizens, as well as humbler wooden cottages for the poorer inhabitants. If, however, you venture to go among the rural population of the surrounding country, you may chance to come upon Russian, Esthonian, and Finnish peasants still leading an existence as primitive and cheerless as that of their ancestors ages ago. The proximity of the chief city of the Empire seems to have had little or no influence over them for good. Of course, one must

be careful in drawing general conclusions, as extraordinary contrasts and exceptions are to be met with. Considerable changes also in this respect are expected to result from the great political reforms of the last four years. For the present these very reforms only help to make the contrast between the enlightenment of the better classes and the degradation of the lower orders all the more striking. Of all European countries of to-day, Russia is the only one in which we can witness a struggle going on between the newest ideas of the most modern civilization and such an awful state of things as that depicted by Count Tolstoy in his 'Power of Darkness,' and by Maxim Gorky in his 'Creatures that once were Men.'

When the author made his first visit to St. Petersburg by sea, he thought the latter part of the route extremely uninteresting. It was particularly so when one considered that the last portion of it for a couple of hundred miles or more lay through the Finnish Gulf, which in some places, I believe, is not more than about thirty miles from one coast to the other. It is true the passage amongst the rocks and islets of the Finnish side is a delightful one, but that is a dangerous coast, and the larger steamers steer wide of it, far out in the gulf.

Therefore, there was nothing to attract attention, and no coast scenery to admire, after leaving Scandinavia. What appeared strange was that there were no indications of our being near to such a great city as St. Petersburg, even within a few miles only of its actual site. After having seen the picturesque and charming view of the channel leading into Stockholm, the approach to St. Petersburg was certainly not inviting. The only relief of the monotonous outlook was that of the warning lights at night, and an occasional glimpse of low-lying shores in the day-time, until we neared the end of the voyage. Finally, we came in sight of the mid-water forts of Cronstadt, stretching across the entrance to the mouth of the Neva.

At that time there was no sea canal to enable vessels of deep draught to proceed up the river in safety. Passengers had either to tranship into Russian river boats, which landed them at the quays of the town, or else to cross over the channel at Cronstadt to the small settlement of Oranienbaum, whence they were able to reach St. Petersburg by train. The only change since made in these arrangements is that visitors, if they choose, may now come right into St. Petersburg port on

ocean-going steamers through the sea or Cronstadt Canal.

After leaving Cronstadt, there was no sign of St. Petersburg being immediately in front of us until we caught sight of a brilliant glitter in the hazy distance, which, we were told, was a reflection from the gilded dome of the St. Isaac Cathedral, the Russian St. Paul's, and the highest building in the city. As the boat brought us nearer to this luminous landmark, the city itself seemed literally to rise out of the water. This aspect of the situation was afterwards fully confirmed to us when we mounted to the top of the dome of St. Isaac's, and looked down upon the immense volume of water in which the city seemed to float.

On a later occasion, when the author selected the land route for his next trip to St. Petersburg, he found the last half of the journey to it, through Russian territory, even less inspiring than the voyage through Russian waters. The most wonderful sight of all was the glaring difference between Russia and Germany. The transition from the one country to the other was a revelation in itself. Probably no other two neighbouring countries in the world ever exhibited such a distinct contrast on





THE LATE FATHER JOHN OF CRONSTADT IN HIS GARDEN  
His surname was Sergieff





their very boundaries between different states of culture as that presented by Russia and Germany near the frontier stations of Eydtkuhnen and Verjbolovo. On the German side of the small stream forming the frontier line strict order, discipline, and neatness, well-tilled fields, tidy farms and homesteads, deer-stocked parks, and well-kept woods were the rule. The other side of the line is best described by saying that it exhibits just the reverse of all this. Right up to St. Petersburg clusters of wretched wooden huts and log-cabins, many of them in a broken-down condition, and without the least traces of gardens or comfort of any kind, were passed in monotonous repetition, one village being exactly like every other. A poverty-stricken look hung over the dreary, flat landscape. Only near Vilna was there any enlivenment of the scene, and here, too, there was actually a railway-tunnel, a thing unheard of over thousands of miles of Russian railway outside the Crimea and the Caucasus.

The arrival at St. Petersburg by rail was just as abrupt as the arrival there by boat. There were no suburbs to serve as an introduction; no running of the train between miles of houses on a level with the first-floor windows. The railway-station

was right on the edge of the city, where it stands at the present day.

The general *coup d'œil* of St. Petersburg is certainly a magnificent one when you get there, but it cannot be said that the city is located in the midst of a rich and prosperous-looking part of Russia.

## CHAPTER II

### IDEOLOGICAL AND POLITICAL ASPECTS OF ST. PETERSBURG

Struggle between old and new—Revolutionary influence—Cradle of new ideas—The Constitution—Slavophiles and Westerns—Liberal reforms—Nihilists—St. Petersburg, Persia, and Turkey—Reaction—The Dooma.

THE subjects which have always most interested the author in his Russian studies are what may perhaps be called the ideological and political aspects of St. Petersburg. As a city which represents a long struggle brought down to the present day of the new against the old, of Europe against Asia, it seems to occupy quite a unique position. As everybody knows, it did not spring from any national growth, but was the deliberate creation of one single mind in the person of the 'most imperious of crowned revolutionists.\*' The work of that one man eventually revolutionized Russia in a way that he could never have expected.

\* "L'Empire des Tsars," by Anatole Leroy Beaulieu.

It is from this point of view that the present chapter is written.

Six years ago, in 1903, St. Petersburg celebrated the two-hundredth anniversary of its foundation. This year (1909) the whole of Russia celebrates the bicentennial jubilee of the great victory of Poltava, by which Peter the Great secured the safety and the future of his new capital. That crushing defeat of the Swedish enemy, whose one idea was to destroy Peter's work on the Neva, was called by him the 'resurrection' of Russia. Posterity has fully confirmed this opinion of the immense importance of that decisive battle in shaping the destinies of the Russian Empire. From that moment St. Petersburg was free to pursue unmolested the task assigned to it of transforming and modernizing the old Muscovite system. In following this aim ever since with more or less consistency, it has at last turned Russia into a constitutional country. The Constitution may not be a perfect one, seeing that so far it gives the Duma control over legislation only, without any real power over the administration, but the establishment of the new legislative institutions is an immense advance in the right direction. It is a result that Peter himself could



A TROIKA

*James M. Smith*



never have had the least notion of bringing about, for, as we know, while in England he expressed an unfavourable opinion on the limitation of royal power by a parliament. He was not so much interested in the inoculation of Russia with foreign political ideas as he was in the introduction rather of the practical and technical sides of West European civilization. St. Petersburg was established by the autoeratic will of Peter as a means of reforming the Russian people, and gaining the respect of foreign powers; it has now succeeded in reforming autoeracy itself. Without St. Petersburg this could never have been done.

From the first days of its existence St. Petersburg became the centre of new ideas in opposition to the old order of things at Moscow. All modern tendencies have invariably penetrated into Russia through St. Petersburg. Going back as far as the eighteenth century, we know that Catherine II., surrounded by her famous statesmen, contemplated a most thorough reorganization of Russian life and administration. The far-reaching nature of the hopes of the great Empress in this respect are clearly indicated in the well-known observation which she made to Diderot, to the effect that it was her intention to introduce the *tiers état*. At



that time there was no middle class in Russia. The population was divided principally into peasantry and nobility, the merchants being merely trading peasants. Although most of the reforms which Catherine had in view were never practically realized, it may be safely asserted that no ideas of the kind could have ever originated in the centre of old Muscovy.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century St. Petersburg was the cradle of all new political ideas. This time, however, they emanated not from the Sovereign, but from the people, or rather from the nobility. This refers, of course, to the Decembrist movement in 1825, which distinctly aimed at the liberation of the serfs and the establishment of a constitutional form of government. That movement engulfed a number of officers serving in the first regiments of the guard, and representing the best families in Russia. Some of them lost their lives on the scaffold, and hundreds more perished in the mines and wilds of Siberia.

Beginning with the thirties of the last century, Russian intellectual life came to be divided into two camps: the Slavophiles and the Westerns. The headquarters of the Westerns, led by Granofsky



and Belinsky, was in St. Petersburg. The essence of their teaching was to make Russia European. The idea of the Slavophiles of Moscow, headed by such men as Samarin, Aksakoff, and Khomiakoff, was to keep Russia as she was. Therefore, the ideals of the Westerns were in the future; those of the Slavophiles in the past.

The sixties saw the commencement of the realization of the ideals of the Westerns. With the accession to the throne of the Emperor Alexander II., many European principles of political life began to be adopted, and history leaves no room for doubt that the embodiment of those principles met with the most stubborn resistance from the partisans of the old Russian system. It was only due to the magnanimous determination of Alexander II. that Russia was recast in moulds borrowed from the West. In that process St. Petersburg was the laboratory of all the measures then introduced. Such were the emancipation of the serfs, the establishment of local self-government, of county and municipal councils, the reform of the judicial institutions, and a modified freedom of the press. It cannot be denied that these measures were radically new and uncongenial to the great mass of the Russian people. Many Russians, there-

fore, detested St. Petersburg, which, it is true, was very far away from the Russia endeared to them by history and tradition. Subsequent experience, however, proved that these great reforms were gradually accepted by the people, and that they contributed most powerfully towards the national progress in civilization.

St. Petersburg has been the centre of all political movements. Right away from the commencement of the sixties Nihilism and other forms of revolutionary activity, which in many respects have exercised such an unhappy influence on the development of political institutions in Russia, have always been centralized in St. Petersburg. Such movements were greatly checked at times, especially during the severe reign of Alexander III., when the revolutionists seemed to be completely suppressed; but discontent burst forth again with renewed vigour during Russia's disastrous war with Japan, and culminated in the establishment of Russian representative government.

It is not too much to say that revolutionary St. Petersburg has also helped in no small degree to revolutionize and 'constitutionalize' the countries of the Near East. The subtle influence of the great northern capital has penetrated far and wide



#### ONE OF THE PALACE GRENADIERS

doing sentinel duty at the Alexander Column in front of the Winter Palace. The men of the Palace Grenadiers are tried veterans from the army, who do sentinel duty at the imperial monuments, and form a guard of honour in the palace on state occasions



through the Caucasus and the Transcaspian, where Russia has no ethnographical frontiers, as in Western Europe, which cut her off completely from her next-door neighbours.

St. Petersburg has thus been the inlet for the European culture required by Russia in her civilizing mission in the East, and Turkey and Persia with their newly established constitutions have indirectly felt the effects of what has occurred on the banks of the Neva.

Long after the original Slavophile opposition from Moscow had apparently died out, the baneful influence of St. Petersburg on 'Holy Russia' was again the theme of reactionary writers and Chauvinists in the Russian press. In the very mildest of their criticisms these journalists treated the St. Petersburg period of reforms as having been, at least, premature and disastrous for the nation. The revival of such an agitation was favoured by the unfortunate circumstances attending the accession to the throne of the present Emperor's father, Alexander III. The latter's father, Alexander II., had just been cruelly murdered in the streets of St. Petersburg, and this set the new Tsar against all liberal ideas. Moreover, his well-known Russian tastes and anti-German feelings

created an atmosphere extremely favourable to the Moscow agitators. The prime mover in this new campaign against the modern capital was Katkoff, the famous editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, the champion of Russian 'orthodoxy, autocracy, and nationality.' He or one of his colleagues raised the cry in the press of 'back to Moscow,' thereby meaning a return to the old national ideals as distinguished from those of the West, to which they believed the Tsar Emancipator had fallen a victim.

Some enthusiasts of that time, who were in favour of re-Russianizing Russia, even went so far as to send their letters through the post addressed to 'Petrograd' instead of St. Petersburg, *grad* or *gorod* being the Slavonic word for town or the German *burg*. The German names which Peter the Great was so fond of giving to everything were always an eyesore to the old-world Russian, and are not altogether pleasing to the Russian patriot of to-day. The Emperor Alexander III. himself was influenced against this German nomenclature, and although he did not change any of the names adopted by Peter, he consented to give back to the university town of Dorpat its old Slavonic name of Yourieff, and to make corresponding



alterations in the names of several other places in the Baltic provinces.

The old Slavophiles of the thirties and the Reactionaries under Alexander III. were in reality working for the same old ideals, which the influence of St. Petersburg had rudely shaken. Russian orthodoxy and nationality had been greatly weakened by Peter the Great's German bureaucracy, but there had been no apparent weakening of autocracy. That was no part of Peter's intention, for he exercised his autocratic function with irresistible and brutal effect. As Alexander III. proclaimed at the beginning of his reign, the autocratic power was handed down 'unimpaired' by Peter to his heirs and successors. The Bureaucracy, however, continued to strengthen itself at the expense of the Autocracy, without this fact being clearly discerned by the occupant of the throne. The most arbitrary and cruel acts were performed in the name of the autocratic power without ever coming to the knowledge of the Emperor. It was, of course, impossible for the Sovereign to control the legion of minor autocrats who held undisputed sway in his name in all parts of his vast dominions. Finally, as we have seen, the Autocrat of all the Russias had to call into existence representative institutions

in order to save the situation. This all-important step was, without any doubt, a great triumph for St. Petersburg, and the legitimate outcome of its influence.

Until this establishment of a Russian constitution, the efforts of Slavophiles and Reactionaries above described against the progressive ideals of St. Petersburg were considered to be the last that would ever be heard of the old opposition to Peter the Great's 'window into Europe.' Recent events have thoroughly proved the fallacy of this forecast. The assembling of an elected Dooima was the signal for the organization of more violent reaction by the so-called 'Union of Russian People.' This ultra-patriotic association recruited an army of scouts and hirelings (*boyevaya droozjeena*) under the name of 'black gangs,' which showed that the old Adam of Russian home politics was still alive, only disporting itself under a new guise. It is also noticeable that it was again a rabid reactionary editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, the late M. Gringmuth, who was the soul of the movement in the ancient capital.

The leaders of these 'black gangs' even threatened to mar the celebration of the great victory of Poltava by making a demonstration in







THE STATE DOOMA

A member speaking from the tribune

that town during the ceremonies and festivities in the presence of the Emperor and the Court, but their intentions were frustrated in time by official interference. At the moment of writing this chapter their late president is under citation to appear before a Finnish court of justice as a suspected accomplice in the political murder of a member of the Dooma named Herzenstein. He has so far refused to obey the summons on the ground that as a Russian he does not recognize Finnish law, and there seems to be no authority strong enough to compel him.

It will thus be seen that St. Petersburg is richly interesting in regard to the ideas which it has always propagated, as also in regard to those with which it has always been at war. An entirely new policy was embodied in its very buildings, and it still represents a great foreign influence in the country of which it is the capital. It remains significant of the violent break with all that went before it, and of the introduction of what was completely at variance with the deep-rooted habits and traditions of the past. In short, it remains emblematic of the Europeanization of Russia, the end of semi-Asiatic Muscovy, and the establishment of the modern State. Even to-

day it is not typical of the Russian 'hinterland' away off the main lines of communication which run through the few principal towns.

The latest and most important creation of the forces and influence spread by St. Petersburg throughout the country is, of course, the national Dooma, and the author ventures to spell the name of it in a different way from the usual one for the following reason :

This word, which is comparatively new in English print, has already, however, become fashionable in a form that does not convey the proper Russian sound of it. One constantly hears it pronounced with the more usual sound of the English *u*, as in 'tune.' Its proper pronunciation is exactly the same as that of the English word 'doom' with the addition of a short *a* sound at the end. In this spelling no mistake could possibly be made in the pronunciation. What more natural, therefore, than to write it 'Dooma' instead of Duma? I venture to suggest this alteration in the spelling of Duma with considerable diffidence, notwithstanding the obvious reason for it, because any attempt to correct the orthography of a foreign word which has already received general currency in the British press is liable to be

resented as a pedantic interference with established usage.

In the next place, it may be mentioned that the word 'Dooma,' as meaning the Russian Parliament, is called in Russia the 'State Dooma' (*Gosudarstvennaya Dooma*). With this qualification it is distinguished from a municipal dooma or council (*Gorodskaya Dooma*). England has just begun to make the acquaintance also of these town 'doomas' in connection with a loan floated for the Dooma of Moscow. In the 'renovated' Russia of the immediate future, these other doomas will probably be heard of quite frequently. The word is derived from a Russian root meaning thought, reflection, etc.

From the historical point of view it may be interesting to note that the term 'dooma,' as signifying an institution of the realm, did not appear for the first time in 1906, or in connection with the establishment of the municipal councils in 1872. Institutions called by that name date back as far as the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, when they exercised most important functions in the old system of Russian government. The 'Dooma' of those days was the Council of the Russian Boyars, the Barons of Russia. Like all old parliaments, it was a mere consultative body,

but no measure of importance was ever passed into law without the advice and consent of the Boyars. It was only after the introduction of Ivan the Terrible's policy of crushing all forces which tended to modify the autoeracy that the old 'Dooma' of the Boyars began to lose its importance, and eventually it completely disappeared about the time when Peter the Great came to the throne.





THE MEMBERS LEAVING THE DOOMA





## CHAPTER III

### SITE OF ST. PETERSBURG IN THE PAST

History of the Neva region—England's sea trade with Russia—Finns and Novgorodians—Neva route in the time of Saxon England—Hanseatic league—Slavs and Scandinavians—Roman-Swedish crusade—Victory of Alexander Nevsky—Teutonic knights—Swedish and Russian fortresses—Civil war—Treaty of Stolbovo.

THE character and achievements of Peter the Great quite eclipsed the fame of his predecessors on the Russian throne. The new Russia which he inaugurated, and which he and his successors forced upon the world's astonished attention, soon caused the old order of things at Moscow to be forgotten. The originality of Peter's genius and policy made it difficult to associate his work with anything that had gone before it. The old semi-Asiatic Russia seemed to fade into myth and legend in comparison. Peter's reign was so wonderful that it completely overshadowed everything that had led up to it, and seemed to detach him entirely from the history of the past. This was particularly the case with regard

to the antecedents of the region in which he established St. Petersburg.

The position of affairs on the banks of the Neva prior to the period of Peter the Great attracted no attention in England, for obvious reasons. It is a question whether anything at all was known about it. The Baltic was nearly a Swedish lake, and other seafaring nations were excluded from it as much as possible. England's first intercourse with ancient Russia and the Muscovite Government was conducted almost exclusively through the more remote northern port of Archangel. It was at this place that Russia was accidentally discovered by Englishmen in 1553, when Richard Chancellor strayed into the White Sea while trying to make the north-eastern passage to China. Instead of a new passage to China this unexpected discovery opened up a new sea-route to Russia. The Swedes then held sway in the Baltic Sea, and tried to prevent us from trading direct with Russia through that channel. The Poles, as well as the Swedes, opposed all commerce—especially English commerce—with Russia in the Baltic and Gulf of Finland, while they at the same time endeavoured to prevent Russia's expansion towards open water in that direction. Their policy was to repress their great

Muscovite neighbour, and keep him as much as possible out of touch with the Western world. The Kings of Sweden and Poland both became exasperated against England, on account of advice and assistance given to the Tsar by Queen Elizabeth's envoys and the English merchants at Moscow. In 1569 the Poles seized some English ships on their way to Narva, and King Sigismund subsequently declared war against England for paying no heed to his remonstrances. Thus access to Russia through the Baltic was rendered exceedingly difficult for the English 'merchant adventurers' of those days, and business with Moscow was therefore carried on almost entirely by way of the long and circuitous route round the North Cape. They never attempted apparently to penetrate farther into Russia by sea through the Gulf of Finland, for if the Baltic Sea was nearly a Swedish lake, the Finnish Gulf was probably quite one.

When Peter the Great appeared on the Neva and crippled the sea power of Sweden, it seemed as if the history of this almost unknown part of Russia was only then beginning. In this connection it was generally believed that St. Petersburg had been founded in the midst of quite uninhabit-

able swamps and forests. This was true only as far as concerns the existence of these swamps and forests, but not as regards the absence of population. The whole country hereabouts, covering an area larger than that of the United Kingdom, was then, and still is to a great extent, swampy. And this seems to have been an advantage in one respect, for it was the bogs and forests that protected old Novgorod, 120 miles south of St. Petersburg, against the hordes of Tartar horsemen when they overran and devastated the rest of Russia. The entire lake region of this part of Northern Russia is essentially part and parcel of the adjoining 'land of the thousand lakes,' which is the most watery country in the world. Its beautiful lake system fully answers to this poetical appreciation, but its native name, *Suomenmaa* (the Swampy Region, alias Fenland or Finland), is not so attractive. There can be no doubt, therefore, about the swampy character of the site of St. Petersburg. But this did not prevent it from being a place of human abode long before either Swedes or Muscovites appeared on the scene. One of the hardiest of human races, the Finns, settled here in very remote times, and gave Finnish names to every part of the Neva delta.



THE TSAR REVIEWING HIS TROOPS



Peter the Great renamed all these places, or turned their Finnish names into Russian. This fact alone proves that the inhabitants of St. Petersburg were by no means the first dwellers on the Neva. What did swamp matter to the adamantine Finn? His very name, denizen of the swamp (*Suomalaine*), seemed to argue a preference for this kind of country. His power of resistance to the unhealthy effects of local conditions, which afterwards helped to destroy so many other lives in St. Petersburg, was part of his early reputation. Eventually, notwithstanding these unfavourable conditions of the country, the Finn became one of the chief causes which induced the other races of Northern Europe to endeavour to obtain a footing on the banks of the Neva. In pursuit of this purpose, the Novgorodian Russians and the Swedes followed the Finns into these parts. They built here castles and founded settlements, which changed hands between them several times over during the long struggle for permanent possession.

In the earliest times of which there is any record of this part of Russia, the Neva served as an artery of trade between Europe and Asia. The whole region through which this river flows was part of the territory of Novgorod called the 'Vodsky Fifth.'



The city of Novgorod was divided for administrative purposes into five sections, each of which had outlying territory attached to it. The 'fifth' in question was called after one of the three tribes of aboriginal inhabitants of Finnish stock, named Izjora, Korelia, and Vod—who dwelt along the banks of the Neva. Their names were identical with those of the districts which they inhabited, and two of these names, Izjora and Korelia, exist at the present day. This Vodsky Fifth extended from Lake Ladoga, along the left bank of the Neva and the shore of the Finnish Gulf in the direction of Revel, and on the right bank of the river and northern shore of the gulf as far as the little river Sestra, which is now distinguished by a fashionable watering-place named Sestroretsk, about eighteen or twenty miles from St. Petersburg.

According to Arabian and Persian chronicles, in the period of our Saxon Kings of England the Persians, and even the Hindus, received wares from the West along this trading-route. These goods were either landed at the mouth of the Dvina, or brought to Novgorod along the waterway now commanded by St. Petersburg, whence they were conveyed down the Volga to Eastern markets. Evidence of this ancient traffic between East and



West has been brought to light in discoveries of large accumulations of Saxon and Arabian coins, dug up in several places at the mouth of the Neva, and on the shores of Lake Ladoga. Nestor, the patriarch of Russian literature (eleventh century), wrote that 'the Neva served as a means of communication between peoples of the West and Novgorod through the Volkhoff; by the Neva they went into the Varangian Sea, and by that sea to Rome.' That was when the Russians were still on good terms with the Varangians, or Scandinavians, whose Princes they had once invited to come and rule over them. Later on the Russians and Swedes began to quarrel, through the efforts of both peoples to secure the allegiance of the Finns. The Novgorodians appear to have begun the conflict by making themselves masters of a part of Southern Finland. And thus it was that the Russians entered upon the long series of hostilities with the descendants of their former friends and helpers, the Variags, which lasted for no less than six centuries. In fact, it may be said that the great political struggle which Imperial Russia has waged with the Finnish Constitutionalists for the last ten years or more down to the present moment is essentially a Swedish question. Everything in

the religion, culture, laws, and political life of Finland which goes to make opposition to Russia is of Swedish origin. It is, therefore, only natural that the Finns should be inspired by Swedish ideals in preference to dictation from St. Petersburg.

When the Hanseatic League began to flourish, a considerable business was worked up through the channels of the Neva and the Volkhoff with the 'Sovereign Great Novgorod,' as that city was then styled by its independent citizens. This was facilitated by the Hanseatic towns having direct water communication with Novgorod through the Gulf of Finland, the Neva, and the Ladoga Lake, into which the Volkhoff empties itself. At the junction of the Volkhoff with the lake there appears to have been a town or settlement, with guest-houses and storage, belonging to Russian and German merchants.

A notable part in this trade between the Russians and the Hansa towns was played by the ancient city of Wisby, the capital of the island of Gotland, in the Baltic, near the Swedish coast. This rich and important member of the great commercial confederation was the principal depot and distributing centre for the Oriental wares which were brought to Europe along the rivers of Russia. It had



ICE-CUTTING ON THE NEVA



its representatives in Novgorod, and in a commercial sense that Russian city has been called the daughter of Wisby. It is pretty certain that, through the transactions of Wisby and her neighbours with the Russians, the latter were better known to Western Europe in those early days than they were later under the despotism of the Moscow Tsars. The merchants of Wisby were renowned for their wealth, and its shippers for their seamanship. Their celebrated *Water-recht*, or Sea Code, passed into the maritime law of nations, and in an old ballad it was said that ‘the Gotlanders weighed out gold with stone weights, and played with the choicest jewels; the swine ate out of silver troughs, and the women spun with distaffs of gold.’

This profitable commerce, however, suffered considerably from the strife which gradually sprang up between Slavs and Scandinavians over the allegiance of the Finns and the command of the Neva. In 1143 the Swedes, assisted by the Finns, attacked the Russians at Ladoga, and were repulsed. From that time the contest became serious, and, in spite of several treaties of peace, it went on intermittently for 600 long years. A stop was finally put to it, once and for all, by the

Peace of Åbo in 1743, which finally confirmed Russia in possession of the whole of the Neva district and the Gulf of Finland.

Besides the Swedes on the one hand, the Danes began to approach through the Baltic provinces on the other. In 1223 Pope Innocent III. persuaded Voldemar II. of Denmark to lead his troops through Esthonia, and build a castle at Narva, on the River Narova. Then came the Teutonic Knights and Brothers of the Sword, who also tried to extend their conquests into the region of the Neva. The struggle with these German intruders took place in the south-western part of the present province of St. Petersburg, and lasted about 400 years. In the end their possessions in the Baltic provinces were divided between the Swedes and the Poles.

The ostensible object of those German and Livonian Knights was to spread Christianity by dint of the sword amongst the 'Baltic heathen and Russian schismatics,' and their example was followed with great enthusiasm by the Swedes. It is strange to think nowadays that Russia, who was the great champion of Christianity against the savage pagans from Central Asia, was herself to be made the victim of a religious war at the hands of Western



Christians. A holy crusade was, in fact, undertaken against the 'heathen Russians' at the behest of the Pope, conveyed in a Bull to the Archbishop of Upsala in 1237. Pope Gregory IX. promised absolution and eternal happiness to all who took part in this war, and great preparations were made for it during two years. Exciting sermons were preached in all the churches, and the priests pointed to a comet, which appeared at the time to the east of Sweden, as a sign from the Almighty indicating the direction to be taken by the crusaders. Large numbers of volunteers were recruited from all parts, and adventurers of all kinds were induced to join the ranks. The Swedes took with them also many Norwegians and Finns, and a great many of the clergy, including several Bishops. The head of the expedition was the famous Jarl Birger, brother-in-law to King Erick of Sweden. Just as if they were marching against the infidel and 'unspeakable' Turk, the Swedish regiments embarked with the singing of hymns, while their priests held aloft the cross and bestowed the blessing of the Church. The Swedish war-ships set sail for Åbo, then the capital of Finland, and thence, up the Gulf of Finland, into the Neva.

It was the intention of Jarl Birger first to attack

Ladoga, and then seize Novgorod, and convert the Russians to Latinism. He landed his forces at the mouth of the Izjora, a tributary of the Neva, where in ancient times there had been a prosperous town or settlement in connection with the Hanseatic trade. This spot is only about fifteen miles up the River Neva above St. Petersburg. From this halting-place Jarl Birger sent out an insolent challenge to the Grand Prince, or Grand Duke, Alexander Yaroslavovitch, who was then the elected Prince of Novgorod. Prince Alexander at once gave orders to muster all available troops, and hastened to the old Cathedral of St. Sophia, where he was surrounded by a crowd of alarmed and weeping citizens. In front of the altar he prayed long and fervently before setting out against the foe. The religious element in this campaign especially roused the patriotic sentiments and ardour of the Russians. At the same time the Grand Duke was greatly impressed by an incident which occurred to a trusty servant of Novgorod—a sort of warden of the marches in the Izjora territory—named Pelagoosy. This man was a Finn, converted from paganism, and he was devoted to the Russians and Eastern Orthodoxy. He related how, while watching the enemy day and night, he had once seen the



Russian saints Boris and Gleb standing in a boat on the Izjora, and had heard them urge the boatmen to row faster, as they wished to help their kinsman the Grand Duke Alexander. This story, told confidentially to the Grand Duke, helped to fire his pious ardour, and was accepted as a presage of coming victory.

The Russian troops drew near to the camp of the Swedes at the mouth of the Izjora without, it seems, rousing the least suspicion of their approach. There was no idea of the Russians moving so quickly, and Jarl Birger and his men were quietly resting after the long voyage. Their confidence was apparently so great that they took no trouble to send out scouts or make reconnaissances. At any rate, the Swedes suddenly found themselves attacked in the very midst of their tents, on the morning of July 15, 1240. So sudden and so furious was the Russian onslaught that many of the crusaders had no time to recover themselves, and fled for refuge to their boats. The Grand Duke himself tried to engage Birger, and dealt him such a blow in the face that, according to the Russian chronicle, he 'set his seal on the physiognomy of the Swedish commander.' Prodigies of valour are recorded of the Russians on this occasion. History has preserved

the names of many who plied their favourite weapon, the axe, with awful effect among the foe, and of others who leapt into the water in pursuit of the retreating Swedes, and killed them in their boats. The Swedish and Norwegian crusaders were completely routed.

The author has dwelt on some of the details of this important battle because of the great value attached to it by the Russians in connection with the site of St. Petersburg. For this exploit the Grand Duke was canonized under the name of St. Alexander Nevsky, or St. Alexander of the Neva. One of the first things which Peter the Great considered it his duty to do, when he began the foundation of St. Petersburg, was to have St. Alexander Nevsky made the patron saint of his new capital, and cause a magnificent monastery to be built in his name for the reception of the saint's remains. This establishment, the well-known Alexander Nevsky Lavra, is conspicuously situated at one end of the Nevsky Prospect, near the left bank of the Neva, and only a few miles from the spot where the famous victory was gained.

On receiving the good news, the Novgorodians joyfully exclaimed that the 'Romans had been defeated and disgraced.' By this, of course, they

referred to the part taken in the expedition by the Roman Catholic Church, and it clearly shows the importance of the religious element on this occasion. The Swedes and Germans had, in fact, now undertaken to convert the Russians to Roman Catholicism at the point of the sword.

This great victory, however, only checked the Swedes for a time. Meanwhile the Russians were beset by other enemies, the Teutonic Knights, who had captured Pskoff—the “younger sister of Novgorod”—and other places on Russian territory. These crusaders would also soon have been on the Neva had the Novgorodians not marched against them in 1284, and destroyed their fortress at Korporye.

In 1300 the Swedes, who were then strong in Finland, established the castle of Viborg, and reappeared on the Neva. This time they endeavoured to establish a fortified position, which they named Landskron, or Crown of the Land, on the riverside, near the outlet of the small river Okhta. But the work was not allowed to go on long, for the next year it was completely destroyed by Prince André, a son of Alexander Nevsky. This was the first attempt to establish a Swedish town within the limits of the present Russian capital.

In order to be able to offer greater resistance to these continual encroachments, the Russians in 1323, built a fortress at Ladoga, on a small island at the head of the Neva, where that river flows out of the lake. They called it after the name of the island, Oryekhoff, or Oryeshk (a nut), because the island was shaped like a hazel-nut. This fortification of the source of the Neva somewhat troubled the Swedes, and King Magnus was induced to send ambassadors to conclude peace. But in 1384 that same King not only renewed the war, but he himself sailed into the Neva, at the head of the Swedish fleet, and summoned the inhabitants of the district to choose between death and acceptance of the Roman Catholic faith. After anchoring off Birch Island, now the Petersburg side, where Peter the Great, over three centuries later, laid the foundation of his new city, the Swedish King proceeded to Ladoga, and captured Oryekhoff. The name was then translated into Swedish as Nöteborg, from *nöt*, a nut. Not very long after the return of the King to Sweden this fortress was retaken by the Novgorodians, and 800 of the Swedish garrison were either killed or wounded.

In 1411 Oryekhoff, alias Nöteborg, was seized a second time by the Swedes, and held by them for

more than a hundred years. Once again it became Russian, and then once more Swedish. At last, at the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth centuries, circumstances became particularly favourable for the Swedes. Novgorod had lost its independence to Moscow, and Russia's national power was greatly weakened by sedition and rivalry for possession of the throne. In this state of things Charles IX. of Sweden even assisted the Russians in their difficulties by sending an army against the false Demetrius and the Poles who supported that pretender. For this service the Russians promised to accept the younger son of Charles as their Tsar, but the honour was never conferred.

During this so-called *Smootnoe Vremya*, or period of troubles, the Swedes took advantage of the opportunity to settle themselves firmly on the Neva and Lake Ladoga. After the first Romanoff had been elected to the throne, they were confirmed in possession by the Treaty of Stolbova, a village near Ladoga. This treaty was made with the first Tsar of the new dynasty on February 27, 1617. There was again war with the Muscovites, but in the long run the Swedes remained masters of the situation on the Neva down to the advent of Peter the Great.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE SWEDES AND PETER THE GREAT ON THE NEVA

Swedish proselytism—Nyenskantz, the nucleus of St. Petersburg  
—Trade under the Swedes—Peter the Great's conquest of  
the Neva.

AFTER the fall of Novgorod as an independent unit, the Moscow Tsars took measures to colonize the old dependencies of that once Republican city. The Swedes did the same, especially after the Treaty of Stolbovo, when all the lands of the Neva and Izjora basins were formally incorporated into the Swedish province of Ingria, or Ingermanland. By that treaty, Russian noblemen, monks, and other subjects of the Tsar on the ceded territories, were allowed to leave within a fortnight if they so desired. All Russians remaining after that short notice came under the Swedish Crown. Nevertheless, large numbers continued to go over to Moscow long afterwards, and of this the Swedes complained. Consequently, in October, 1649, the Tsar, Alexis



Michailovitch, father of Peter the Great, undertook to pay Sweden for the runaway Russians, and promised to receive no more of them. It is pretty certain that religious dislike had a good deal to do with this flight, for Sweden did not cease to proselytize, although she had given up crusading proper, and had become the champion of Protestantism. The zeal of the King of Sweden for the cause of the Reformed Church expressed itself in the establishment of a Russian printing-press at Stockholm, whence religious literature was issued for distribution among the orthodox Russians in Ingermanland and Korelia. The same was done for the Finns, and in this way the Swedish Church taught every Finnish peasant to read the Bible. Its chances of doing this for the Russians were limited, and the Russian Church itself is a very long way from having accomplished it even at the present day.

It is related that Gustavus Adolphus had the idea of sending Mecklenburg peasants to colonize Korvu-saari, or Birch Island, on which Peter afterwards began the work of building the new city. This was suggested by one of the King's Generals, who had taken part in the long struggle with the Russians, and who knew the local conditions.

Some of the Swedish commanders had been rewarded with valuable estates on the Neva, and they must have been well aware of the importance of having a strong colony there. Such a plan was no doubt a feasible one during the 'Thirty Years' War. In all probability, many Mecklenburgers would have then been found willing to leave their desolated homesteads and settle in a new country under the protection of the Protestant hero; but the fall of Gustavus Adolphus, at the Battle of Lützen, put an end to the scheme.

The most important enterprise of the Swedes on the Neva at this time was undoubtedly the establishment of Nyenschantz, or Nyenskantz—now Okhta—at the mouth of the small tributary of the Neva bearing that name. This took place at the suggestion of the well-known Swedish General De la Gardie, whose descendants eventually entered the Russian service. A small fortress was first built on the right bank of the Neva in 1632, and a small but flourishing town soon grew up in the neighbourhood. On the same spot there had been a Russian commercial settlement prior to 1521, in which year it was destroyed by sea-pirates. At a much earlier date Landskron, the first attempt at a Swedish settlement here, was also located in this







KAZAN CATHEDRAL

With semicircular and arched colonnade of 136 pillars, in imitation of St. Peter's at Rome.

vicinity. To-day the same site is occupied by a populous and important suburb of St. Petersburg called Big and Little Okhta. Opposite to it, on the left bank of the Neva, is Smolny, with its fine Cathedral by Count Rastrelli, and Institute for Daughters of the Nobility. Not far from Smolny Institute is the Taurid Palace, the seat of the State Dooma, originally the mansion of Catherine's renowned favourite and General, Prince Potemkin, the conqueror of the Crimea.

In the seventeenth century Smolny was a colony of Russian tar-distillers, from whom it derived its name (*smolà*, pitch). The colony was dependent upon Nyenskantz, and an interesting fact in connection with it illustrates the attitude of the Swedes towards the Russian colonists in general at this period. The Russians at Smolny were under the religious control of the authorities of the Swedish Church. The Chief Superintendent of religious matters in Ingermanland was then the Bishop of Narva, the learned Gezelius, who had studied at Oxford and Cambridge. His duties included periodical visits to the Swedish and Finnish clergy at Nyenskantz. On such occasions he inspected their churches and schools, and crossed over to Smolny to hear the Russian priests put the

members of their flock through a catechism that had been drawn up by the ecclesiastical authorities at Stockholm.

This circumstance not only gives an insight into the relations between Swedes and Russians in the flourishing period of Swedish rule on the Neva, but also shows that this locality in the *dopetrofskiya*, or 'ante-Peter' times, came to be something more than the haunt of a few Finnish fishermen. Former writers who described it as such were apparently not acquainted with all the historical data on the subject. There was no lack of fisher-folk here, it is evident, and the Neva salmon were famous; but there was also a prosperous commercial body, carrying on a considerable trade with Lübeck and Amsterdam. For example, during the summer of 1691 over 100 foreign vessels discharged their cargoes on the Neva, the goods being probably sent up the River Volkhoff to Novgorod. There is also evidence that the commercial community of Nyenskantz was a wealthy one, if we may judge by the fact that one of its merchants, by the name of Frelius, was able to lend a large sum of money to Charles XII. in his war against Russia.

The floating traffic between Smolny and Okhta,

two very important parts of St. Petersburg, has been on the increase ever since this period of Swedish rule. Its growing requirements have long demanded the construction of a bridge across the Neva at these two points, where direct communication is still carried on only by means of a ferry and a service of small steamboats. For many centuries boats and barges have been used here to communicate between the two banks. Only this summer (1909) the Municipal Dooma started the construction of a bridge, after a discussion of the question which had lasted for thirty years.

On Swedish maps of the year 1670 some forty-five villages and farms are dotted over the area now occupied by St. Petersburg. There was good pasture-land, abundance of water-fowl, and plenty of winged and four-footed game in the surrounding woods. The elk was then hunted here by the Swedes, as it is still by the Russians, in the immediate neighbourhood of St. Petersburg. One extensive preserve, owned by a Swedish nobleman, skirted that part of the river-side which is now the Palace Quay, and the gamekeeper's lodge was not far from Princess Soltykoff's mansion, now occupied by the British Embassy.

Such was the state of things on the Neva when

Peter the Great began to turn his serious attention in that direction. The great reformer had returned from his historical visits to England and Holland, had put down rebellion in Moscow, and made an unsuccessful attempt to wrest Narva from the grasp of the Swedes. He was now resolved to attack Nöteborg and Nyenskantz, and get control of the Neva.

Immediately after Peter's defeat at Narva, he set about preparing for another campaign with extraordinary energy and resource. What he himself achieved and what he forced others to accomplish so rapidly is simply marvellous when we consider the condition of the country and the people at the time. The survivors of the disaster at Narva were rallied, fresh recruits mustered from all sides, ships built, hundreds of cannon cast out of bells taken from churches and monasteries, and religious services, which took up so much time, were suspended to enable priests and monks to take part in the one absorbing task of the hour. While all this was going on, the chief centres of activity being Moscow and Novgorod, Peter somewhat suddenly marched off with five battalions of troops to Archangel. This expedition was supposed to be the effect of a rumour that the Swedes intended to



assail that port. There is reason, however, to believe that Peter availed himself of the diversion to screen his plans against Nöteborg, for we find him sending secret orders to have the fact of his northern journey bruited about in the foreign press, with the object of deceiving the Swedes. It was even rumoured abroad that he had set out from Archangel for the coast of Sweden.

On arriving at Archangel, Peter witnessed the launch of two small frigates, which he named the *Holy Spirit* and the *Courier*. He then had them dragged overland from the Bay of Onega to the northern end of the Onega Lake, where they were relaunched, and sent on the River Svir into Lake Ladoga. For this purpose many miles of road had to be made, with enormous labour, through thick forests and swamps; and the work of moving these vessels on rollers placed under their keels as they were drawn along, and prevented from listing, was exceedingly difficult. In fact, seeing the obstacles naturally presented by the stumps of felled trees, it is not easy to understand how this was accomplished. Peter shared in all this manual toil much like a common soldier or workman, sending out orders all the time to Moscow and Novgorod.

Before Peter could get to Ladoga, the Swedish

squadron on that lake was defeated by Colonel Tirtoff with a flotilla of Cossack boats. The Swedish Admiral Nummers retreated to Viborg, with a loss of five ships and 300 men, thus leaving the waters of Lake Ladoga in the possession of the Russians.

Peter reached Ladoga at the end of September, 1702, and there met Field-Marshal Sheremetieff, with an army of 12,000 men from Novgorod. The Tsar's original plan of attacking Nöteborg on the ice in the preceding winter had been abandoned on account of a very unusual thaw. The town of Ladoga surrendered without any resistance, but the beleaguered garrison in Nöteborg fought a good fight under its Commandant, Schlippenberg. The bombardment was carried on fiercely for eleven days. On October 11, when a great conflagration broke out in the fortress, and the battered walls were being sealed by the besiegers, the Swedes lowered their flag, and the Russians were again masters of their old citadel of Oryeshek. Only 83 Swedes were left unwounded. In this siege the Russians had 564 officers and men killed, and 938 wounded. The ammunition expended by them amounted to 15,196 cannon-shot, bombs, and hand-grenades, and 72 tons of gunpowder.



The key of the fortress, which was handed over by the Swedish Commandant, was nailed by Peter's orders to the top of the principal bastion, and Oryeshek, alias Nöteborg, was renamed Schlüsselburg, from the German word *Schlüssel*, a key. With this key Russia again unlocked for herself the door to the Baltic.

Peter went in triumph to Moscow for the winter, and returned to Ladoga in the spring of 1703, to make preparations for the capture of Nyenskantz. At the end of April, Sheremetieff's troops from Ladoga were enabled to get close to the fortress of Nyenskantz, under cover of the intervening woods. The Tsar himself passed in front of it on the river, with sixty boats full of soldiers, under a heavy fire from the ramparts. His object was to intercept any assistance for the Swedes likely to arrive at the mouth of the Neva from Viborg. Peter landed these troops on the island of Viti-saari, now Gootoefsky, and returned at once to Sheremetieff's camp.

The reduction of Nyenskantz was not difficult. The garrison consisted of only about 800 men, and after one night's bombardment the Swedish Commandant Apollof consented to negotiate. On May 1 he and his men were permitted to retire to

Viborg, and the Russians entered into possession of what proved to be the nucleus of modern St. Petersburg.

One of the first things which Peter did was to rename the place Schlotburg, or Slottburg, although the Russians had much earlier given it the name of Kantz, from the last part of the word Nyenskantz. Peter had a mania for bestowing new names in German, instead of in his own language. Judging from specimens of his composition, the use of his native tongue, both as regards handwriting and style, was not one of his strong points. His autograph often looks as if it had been produced under the influence of great nervous excitement. In all probability the constant twitching and jerking of his face and limbs, reported of him by many of his contemporaries, had something to do with the ugly scrawls which he has left to posterity.

The surrender of Nyenskantz had only just been effected when the Swedish Admiral Nummers appeared at the mouth of the Neva with a relief squadron. Being quite unaware of the transfer of the fortress, he signalled to it by firing twice, and Peter ordered an answer to be given in the same manner. Then, during the night, Peter sallied



SCHLÜSSELBURG FORTRESS, ON LAKE LADOGA

The object of centuries of strife between Russians and Swedes, and subsequently used as a prison for important political offenders down to 1906



forth from behind the island of Gootooefsky with a flotilla of thirty boats, and surrounded and attacked two of the Swedish ships which had approached closer than the others. After a fierce struggle he captured them both, having killed or wounded nearly everybody on board. The Russians had only small firearms and hand-grenades, and yet they gained the mastery, in spite of the hail of shot poured into them, not only from the two ships actually being attacked, but also from the others, which were obliged to lie off at a distance on account of low water. It is strange how powerless the Swedish war-vessels seem to have been against the Russian boat crews. Peter himself was, it is said, the first to board one of the ships with a grenade in his hand.

In all the operations on Lake Ladoga and the Neva, which Peter really conducted in person, it pleased him to assume inferior rank under his Field-Marshal, Sheremetieff. When he was in Holland he had himself called *Min Her* Peter Mikhailoff, the shipwright; in conquering the site of St. Petersburg he styled himself Mr. Bombardier Captain Peter.

There was still some fighting to be done with the Swedes at various other points, and the position on

the Neva had yet to be rendered perfectly secure by the subsequent capture of Narva and the defeat of Charles XII. at Poltava, but for all practical purposes it was now completely in Peter's grasp. He was able to proceed at once to realize his cherished ideas of founding a European city and making Russia a naval Power.

## CHAPTER V

### ST. PETERSBURG IN THE MAKING

Foundation of St. Petersburg—Attitude of Swedes—Cronstadt—  
St. Petersburg fortress—Beginning of trade—Opposition—  
Compulsory settlement.

AFTER the capture of Nyenskantz, Peter the Great lost no time in setting to work to carry out his project of establishing a commercial town in connection with the utilization of the mouth of the Neva. Nyenskantz itself was unsuited to the purpose, being situated a little too far up the river, where the latter makes a sharp bend towards the south. It was therefore decided at a Council of War to select a spot nearer to the sea. After careful exploration, Peter's choice fell upon the point where the Neva, before entering the Gulf of Finland, branches into three main channels, with several minor ramifications, which form a number of islands of different shapes and sizes. On the first of these islands—a very small one, known by the Finnish name of 'Yanni-saari' (Janni-saari) or



Hare Island—Peter started the building of the fortress of St. Petersburg. Immediately behind Yanni-saari, across a narrow watercourse forming a natural moat at the back of the fortress, was the large island called in Finnish ‘Koivu-saari,’ or Birch Island, now the Petersburg side, on which the first buildings outside the fortress were erected.

On May 16, 1703, Peter the Great, surrounded by his officers and friends, cut the first turf in the centre of Yanni-saari, and buried a stone casket containing relics of St. Andrew the Apostle, and a few gold coins. Having turned up a couple of sods with a soldier’s spade, he placed one on the other in the form of a cross, and commanded a cathedral to be built here, within the walls of a fortress, dedicated to the apostles Peter and Paul. Artillery salutes were fired, and Peter received the congratulations of the assembled company.

Tradition states that during the ceremony an eagle was observed soaring over the head of the Tsar, attention having been directed towards it by the noise of its wings, which was distinctly audible. Shortly afterwards it settled upon a rough kind of triumphal arch marking the position of the future gate of the fortress, and which was made by the stems of two tall birch saplings bent towards each





FORTRESS OF ST. PETER AND ST. PAUL.  
With Cathedral containing the tombs of all the Sovereigns of Russia since the foundation of St. Petersburg  
except that of Peter II., who was buried at Moscow



other and tied together at the top. The bird was brought to the ground, and taken alive. The record of what took place is somewhat confusing, but the eagle was apparently shot at and wounded by one of the attendant soldiers. In any case, the incident greatly delighted Peter, who regarded it as an augury of future success. He had the eagle's legs bound together with a handkerchief, held it perched on his gloved hand while the clergy performed the rite of consecrating the improvised gateway, and then took it with him in his yacht back to Nyenskantz. It became a tame favourite in the palace, and was finally kept by Peter's orders in the guard-room of the fortress at Cronstadt, under the name of 'The Commandant.' Peter seems to have had a liking for birds and animals, for besides favourite dogs he subsequently kept various other four-footed creatures and a large aviary in the garden attached to his summer-house on the southern side of the river.

Wooden barracks and houses were rapidly put up to accommodate the troops from Nyenskantz, and the chief officers and civil officials. Russia being essentially a country of wood, this building material was naturally the first to be used. For himself, Peter had a small hut with only three

rooms, built of logs and roofed over with shingles, just outside the fortress on the adjoining island of the Petersburg side, and later on he had it enclosed in a second building to protect it against the weather. We may infer from this that he intended to preserve it for the edification of future generations, and accordingly this more than modest abode for so mighty a monarch still exists as an object of curiosity, and a depository of various relics of the founder of St. Petersburg. His bedroom here has been turned into a chapel, where prayers are frequently offered up in front of the holy image which accompanied him in all his campaigns, including that of Poltava. Peter disliked large and lofty dwelling-rooms. The relative smallness and rather cramped appearance of the apartments in the old palace at St. Petersburg had not spoiled him in this respect. The so-called 'palaces' which he first built for himself on the Neva—that is to say, the first hut near the fortress; his summer-house still standing in the garden close to the British Embassy; even the first winter palace, the Monplaisir pavilion at Peterhoff, and another house at Cronstadt—were all mere cottages or shanties in comparison with the magnificent structures raised by his luxurious successors. James Keith, afterwards the

famous Prussian Marshal, who entered the Russian service for a time, after Peter's death wrote of him : 'He loved more to employ his money on ships and regiments than sumptuous buildings, and was always content with his lodging when he could see his fleet from his window.'

The work of founding St. Petersburg was carried on almost under the eyes and guns of the Swedes, who threatened to interfere all the time by land and sea. Two months only after beginning the fortress Peter sent General Chambers with a force to repel the enemy under General Kronhjort on the old Finnish border at the River Sestra, whilst Admiral Nummers, with nine Swedish men-of-war, lay anchored off the mouth of the Neva throughout the summer of 1703. The Swedes appear to have shown great indecision at this juncture. When they did take the offensive, little later, Peter's position on the Neva was too strong for them. They failed at first to take Peter's work here seriously. At Stockholm it was the subject of much joking. Among other criticism or satire, it was proposed that the Tsar should call his new town not Petropolis, after himself, but Leperopolis, after the name of the island (Hare Island) on which the fortress was begun, and in malicious

allusion to the first battle of Narva, when the Russians were reported to have run away in a panic like hares. Some of the members of the Swedish Council of State prophesied that it would soon be destroyed by the floods. When Charles XII. received the first news of its foundation, he merely said : ‘ Let the Tsar tire himself with the useless work of founding new towns ; we shall reserve to ourselves the glory of taking them.’

Peter’s energy and activity at this period were prodigious. In October of the same year, when the ice had already begun to float down the Neva, and the Swedish squadron had withdrawn to Finnish waters, he sailed eighteen miles out from the mouth of the river to Kotlin, now Cronstadt, where he took soundings, and resolved at once to fortify that island and construct a midwater fort, which he named Kronslot (again a Swedish name, be it observed, instead of a Russian one), to protect the navigable passage. This fort was built with great labour and difficulty in sinking the submarine foundation during the ensuing winter ; and once Cronstadt was fortified, the fortress at St. Petersburg became practically useless. As Eugene Schuyler states in his ‘ Peter the Great,’ this fortress, ‘ on which so much money and so much



life was spent, protected nothing. Its guns could never reach the enemy unless the town had been previously taken. It now protects nothing but the Mint and the cathedral containing the Imperial tombs. During the reigns of Peter's successors its walls were used as a suitable background for fireworks and illuminations, and its casemates have always been found convenient for the reception of political prisoners. Strategically it may have been necessary to protect the mouth of the Neva, but this was done by Cronstadt.' At first some of its casemates were placed at the disposal of traders for storing wine and other wares; and one of the first political prisoners to be incarcerated here, and done to death in a way that has always remained a mystery, was Peter the Great's own son, Alexis.

Nevertheless, this useless fortress was reconstructed in all seriousness with more solid material some six or seven years later. Its ramparts and six bastions were at first built of wood and earth, which was subsequently replaced by stone revetments and masonry. Of the six bastions, the work on one was superintended by the Tsar himself; that on each of the other five respectively by Menshikoff (the first Governor-General of St. Petersburg), and the other principal men round Peter—



Golovin, Zotoff, Troubetskoy, and Naryshkin. There were four rows of wooden buildings within the walls, and opposite to the guard-house stood a wooden horse with a very sharp back, on which delinquents from the army were forced to sit for hours ; and also a post surrounded with spikes in the ground, where similar offenders were made to stand or walk, attached by a chain fastened on one arm. In the immediate vicinity of these instruments of torture, so characteristic of Russian conditions at the time, was the house of the first Ober-Commandant of the fortress, Jacob Bruce, one of the many Scotchmen then in the service of Russia.

Next to the fortress, Peter gave the greatest attention to the building of the Admiralty and shipbuilding yards on the opposite side of the Neva, where the Tsar's favourite work was soon going on at a rapid pace. In fact, the left bank of the Neva, on which the principal quarter of the city eventually developed, was partly peopled in the first instance by shipwrights—Dutch and other foreign experts in naval construction—together with great numbers of workmen.

In November of the first year of St. Petersburg's existence Peter was immensely pleased at the arrival of the first foreign merchant-vessel in front

of his embryo fortress. This was a Dutch boat, laden with wines and salt, from one of Peter's old acquaintances at Zaandam. It has been said that Peter himself went out to meet this vessel, and personally acted the pilot in guiding it up the river, but this has since been contradicted by Bozjerianoff, who states that Peter had gone to Moscow at the time. At any rate, Peter gave orders that this lucky vessel, which was named the *St. Petersburg*, should be allowed ever afterwards to bring goods into the Neva free of all taxes and dues; and on this occasion its skipper, Auke Wybes, was feasted by Menshikoff, and presented with 500 gold ducats. The men of his crew also received 30 thalers. The next ships to arrive, one English and another from Holland, were treated in a similar manner, the gratuities to their captains being 300 and 150 ducats respectively. By means of these and other encouragements Peter soon attracted foreign trade to St. Petersburg, and ruined the prospects of Archangel — that creation of British merchant adventurers—for many years to come.

Nothing has yet been said about the employment of labour by Peter in his gigantic enterprise. The brilliancy of his genius was such that it tends to throw a glamour over the brutality of his methods,

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and seems to palliate the terrible suffering which the execution of his high designs inflicted upon vast numbers of his long-suffering subjects. And yet this is the most painfully interesting detail of Peter's work. Although he assumed the European title of Emperor, he still remained a real autocratic Tsar of Muscovy. The slavery of ancient Egypt, which produced the pyramids, could not have been worse than that which produced St. Petersburg. The whole of Russia was compelled to take part in the making of it, and it has been estimated that over 100,000 persons perished in course of the operations. Some even put the figure at double this number. Twenty thousand navvies, including the Swedish prisoners, were engaged only on the construction of the fortress, and, as far as concerns the Russians, their primitive habits were such that, in the absence of a proper supply of implements, they raked the soil up with their hands, and carried it to the ramparts in pieces of matting, and even in the tails of their shirts. Men were driven here against their will from all parts of the Empire, not only Russians, but also Tartars, Calmucks, and other Asiatics. There was frightful mortality amongst them, owing to the severity of the climate and the unhealthy conditions in which they were

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forced to live. Those who fell ill simply dropped down on the ground and obstinately refused all medical assistance, preferring to die. The new capital which Peter forced upon an unwilling Russia began by filling its cemeteries from the very first, and its evil reputation for overcrowding them out of all proportion to its population has been steadily maintained down to the present time. In its early days sickness and the death-rate were greatly increased by frequent floods. During Peter's reign there were no less than seven more or less serious inundations, and it seems a marvel that the town was not washed away in its infancy. It was only the tenacity of Peter himself that saved it at this early stage. At one of the Tsar's parties, or 'assemblies,' as he called his first social gatherings, the water suddenly invaded the rooms of the palace, and Peter and his guests had to escape by wading through it ankle-deep. The one or two available routes leading to the town were strewn with decaying carcasses of horses and cattle, sunk deep in the mire of numerous bogs. Everybody, nobleman and peasant alike, hated the place, while Peter loved to write about it as his 'paradise.' Many of the soldiers and workmen ran away whenever they could get the chance, but most of them were soon

caught and brought back. Deserters from their regiments who voluntarily gave themselves up were ordered, as a special act of clemency in consideration of their repentance, to be thrashed with the knout and sent to hard labour in building St. Petersburg. Although the governors of the provinces had a very hard time under Peter, not one of them, it was said by Prince Gregory Dolgorooky, cared to come to live on the Neva. The Princess Mary, half-sister to Peter, remarked to an intimate friend: 'Petersburg will not endure after our time. May it remain a desert!'

No volunteers could be found, either for work or residence, in St. Petersburg. Peter therefore had to contend against the opposition of his people as well as natural difficulties. Such a state of things made progress too slow for this headlong reformer, and he soon resolved to resort to the most drastic measures of compulsion. Accordingly, in 1710, he ordered 40,000 workmen a year for three years to be sent to St. Petersburg from the provinces, and with a view of attracting masons, he further commanded that no stone buildings should be erected in any part of the Russian Empire outside of St. Petersburg under penalty of banishment to Siberia and confiscation of property. Is it surprising if,



after this, the Russian interior continued to be built of wood? By another ukase the Tsar ordered that everybody entering St. Petersburg should bring with them a certain quantity of stone. In 1714 the authorities of the province of Archangel were ordered to send 3,000 men to work on the fortifications at Cronstadt. All officials, nobles, and landowners possessing not less than thirty families of peasant serfs were obliged to settle in St. Petersburg, and build for themselves houses either of wood or stone, according to their means. One of Peter's decrees, dated May 26, 1712, reads as follows: '1. One thousand of the best families of the nobility, etc., are required to build houses of beams, with lath and plaster, in the old English style, along the bank of the Neva from the Imperial palace to the point opposite Nyenskantz. 2. Five hundred of the best-known merchant families, and five hundred traders less distinguished, must build for themselves wooden houses on the other side of the river, opposite to the dwellings of the nobility, until the Government can provide them with stone houses and shops. 3. Two thousand artisans of every kind—painters, tailors, joiners, blacksmiths, etc.—must settle themselves on the same side of the river, right up to Nyenskantz.' In

this autocratic way the young city of Peter's making was built up in an incredibly short space of time. Its durability, however, was not very great. Very few of its buildings remain among the great piles of brick and stone as well as wooden houses which constitute the Petersburg of to-day.

Peter and his advisers seem to have been unable to fix definitely upon any one spot as a centre. The extremely unfavourable conditions of the geographical situation probably made this impossible. The consequence was that a great many persons had to continually shift their homes in accordance with Peter's frequent changes of plan, and this only increased the general discontent. The first settlement was near the fortress, where stood the Government offices, the wooden Church of the Trinity, and the famous tavern called the 'Osteria,' at which Peter and his boon-companions used to take their drams. After many persons had settled down in that neighbourhood they were made to build houses on the opposite side of the river. At one time the Tsar wished to make Cronstadt a commercial town, and compelled the provinces to put up large buildings there, which were never used. Then he had a special plan for making a regular Dutch town, or a second Venice, of the



Vasili Ostroff (in Finnish, Elk Island, where that animal was hunted in the times of the Finns and Swedes), with canals running through all the streets. The nobility were consequently ordered to erect expensive houses in that quarter, but they soon had to abandon them, owing to the discovery that the lowness of the situation, and the difficulties of communicating with the mainland during the seasons of floating ice on the river, rendered the scheme quite impracticable. At the same time there was long a lingering doubt as to the new city being made the actual capital. It would appear that only after the victory at Poltava, in 1709, Peter finally made up his mind to make it the permanent capital, and had all Government institutions still remaining at Moscow transferred to the banks of the Neva.

## CHAPTER VI

### IMPERIAL ST. PETERSBURG

Under Peter I.—Death of Peter I.—Peter II.—Catherine II.—Succeeding Monarchs—Paul I.—Expenditure of Grand Dukes.

FOR more than twenty years Peter the Great was enamoured of the building up of his new European capital. Even when the calls of war and other serious matters demanded his presence elsewhere, he never forgot the interests of his beloved 'paradise' on the Neva. From the battle-field of Poltava, on the night after the great victory, he wrote to Apraxin: 'Now, with God's help, the last stone has been laid of the foundation of St. Petersburg.'

At the same time, while opening up a window into Europe, this new position in the north, far removed from the trammels of old Muscovite influence, enabled him to enforce those extraordinary changes in Russian life and government which he carried out in the teeth of so much obstinate resistance. There was naturally an intimate connection between the work of creating the first

European city of Russia and the introduction of European methods and customs. Foreigners were amazed at the wonderful and rapid transformation of old Muscovite dress and manners into the ways and fashions of Europe which took place in St. Petersburg under Peter's dictation. He made innovations everywhere, and such innovations affected private life as well as every department of Church and State. Not only were the long beards and still longer skirts of his ultra-conservative subjects clipped short at the word of command, but even in such a trivial matter as the soles of their boots they did not escape the interference of this revolutionary reformer. For some reason or other he objected, it seems, to the use of hob-nails and iron boot-protectors. Accordingly, in 1715, a ukase was issued forbidding the wearing of boots and shoes with these additions, and threatening all persons dealing in such articles with hard labour and confiscation of property. Peter's favourite governor of St. Petersburg, Prince Menshikoff, even went farther than his Imperial master. On one occasion, in order to please the Tsar, he invited a whole batch of Russians to his palace, and compelled them then and there to throw off their Asiatic garb and put on ready-made suits of European clothing. They

naturally protested, but this had been provided for in anticipation; a number of sledges were drawn up in front of the street-door, ready to take them off to Siberia without more ado. In such circumstances, of course, they reluctantly submitted to be turned externally into Europeans.

And not only in externals such as these did Peter exercise his zeal in reforming his unprogressive subjects. His directions, for instance, for rooting out official corruption were not to be misunderstood or evaded like the orders of some of his more lenient successors. The leading functionary of the Senate, which Peter established to control the administration, once read a report to the Tsar on the discovery of a whole series of robberies by Government officials, and in concluding the perusal he asked, 'Shall I lop off the branches only, or lay the axe to the root of the evil?' Peter's instantaneous reply was, 'Hack out everything to the very core.'

Peter also introduced a totally new social life among his people in St. Petersburg, while his own free and easy manners must have been quite shocking in comparison with the secluded grandeur in which the old Russian Tsars had been wont to live and rule. He started theatres; organized social



MONUMENT OF PETER I.

Erected by Catherine II. A celebrated work of Falconet



gatherings, which he called 'assemblies,' in French, because he said there was no suitable word for them in Russian; arranged pyrotechnical displays, of which he was very fond, and even played the rôle of a Sherlock Holmes in detecting plots and surprising conspirators. He also frequented taverns, and often took his one-rouble dinner like any ordinary customer at Felton's, the eating-house of a German, who catered for the officers of the garrison. His other favourite occupations of ship-building, forging iron bars, filling fireworks, drinking heavily, and otherwise enjoying his intervals of relaxation, are they not recorded in the history of this great Russian Sovereign? And a fascinating history it is. When once taken up it cannot easily be laid aside, and taken up it must be by anyone who treats of St. Petersburg. An account of the Russian capital without reference to the genius who created it and set it going would be worse than omitting all mention of the ghost in 'Hamlet.' In fact, the ghost of Peter the Great still follows one down the years into modern Petersburg, as it followed poor Evjenie on the Neva Quay in Pooshkin's celebrated description of the great inundation of 1824. Of late years Peter and his exploits have frequently been the subject of national celebrations and new monuments. There are now four



statues erected to him in the capital, one at Peterhoff and another at Cronstadt. Two of those in St. Petersburg are equestrian, with the great Tsar attired as a Roman, one of them being the celebrated work of Falconet. Another is a standing figure of Peter in front of the old wooden church built by him on the Samson Prospect to commemorate the victory of Poltava. The fourth statue, recently set up on the Admiralty Quay, represents Peter rescuing drowning sailors at the mouth of the river in the autumn of 1724. That heroic deed gave him a severe cold, which helped to bring about his death in the following January. As he lay dying in the old Winter Palace, his only recorded utterance was the sad remark made to his weeping Empress, Catherine I. : ‘ You now see by me what a poor creature is man.’ The fittest memorial to this extraordinary Russian monarch and reformer would be a repetition in some conspicuous part of St. Petersburg of Sir Christopher Wren’s epitaph in St. Paul’s Cathedral : *Si monumentum requiris, circumspice*—‘ If you seek his monument, look around.’

The progress of the infant city of St. Petersburg under the personal guidance of such a man as Peter was naturally very rapid. Within eight or ten

years of its foundation there were a dozen streets and about 1,000 houses. The paving of the streets was begun in 1717, and in 1725 Peter ordered lamps to be put up. There is not much left intact to-day of the building work of Peter's time, but the chief point on each side of the Neva, whence the city first developed under Peter's initiative, is still marked by two of the most conspicuous objects in St. Petersburg. These are the tall needle-like spires that crown the old Admiralty and the Cathedral in the fortress. In sunlight and clear frosty weather these gilded spires shine like shafts of fire shooting upward to the sky, and they are all the more striking inasmuch as they bear no resemblance to the cupolas and belfries of the Russian churches around them. The mellow tone of the old Dutch chimes beneath the one on the Fortress Cathedral is a pleasant relief from the discordant style of Russian bell-ringing, and it reminds one irresistibly of old Holland and Germany.

After Peter's death, his widowed Empress and his grandson, Peter II., did nothing for the advancement of St. Petersburg. On the contrary, Peter II. transferred his Court to Moscow, and entertained the idea of divesting Petersburg of its

rank as the capital of the Empire. The mere attempt was immediately disastrous. Houses were deserted, and thousands of persons left this hated spot. Before the reinstallation of the Imperial Court on the Neva, under the Empress Anne, recourse was again had to compulsory measures to bring back the deserters. In 1729 an Imperial decree ordered all merchants, artisans, and drivers, with their families, to be sent back at once, under pain of severe punishment. Then came an epidemic of incendiarism, from which it was evident that many of those obliged against their will to remain in this detested city were determined to revenge themselves by trying to burn it down to the ground. In one case a number of men were hanged at the four corners of a block of buildings to which they had set light only a few hours before. In 1737 over 1,000 houses were destroyed by fire, and many hundred persons perished. Nevertheless, and in spite of popular aversion, arson, floods, and disease, the Russian nation was forced by the iron will of autocracy to conquer its dislike of St. Petersburg. Finally, from being an object of the utmost repulsion it gradually became a place of the greatest attraction, and estates in the provinces were kept going only for the purpose of providing





A DROSHKY-DRIVERS' TEA-STALL

money to be squandered by their owners in the dissipations of the new Russian capital.

The real successor to Peter the Great, as far as concerns the continuation of his work on the Neva, was Catherine II., during whose reign the city made great progress. Many handsome buildings and useful institutions established under that great Empress are still among its finest embellishments. Succeeding monarchs also exercised their 'inflexible wills' upon it in such a way that no other country possesses a capital the rise of which has been to the same extent the result of the wants and wishes of its Sovereigns and their relatives. If Vienna is a real Kaiserstadt, as the Austrians were proudly wont to call it, there is far more reason to apply the title of 'Imperial City' to St. Petersburg, which in the very nature of things Russian has been so completely identified with the Emperors and Empresses of Russia from its very inception. It never could have attained to anything like a prominent position had the Imperial Family not continued to maintain it as the residential city of the Sovereign and the seat of the Imperial Government. Without this powerful support it must have fallen into decay, and in the long run the waves of the Finnish Gulf would have doubt-



less completed its final ruin. A dozen Imperial autocrats since Peter have therefore kept its head above water, and St. Petersburg of to-day is very much what they have caused it to be made.

An interesting fact in this connection may be mentioned in order to show how the Grand Dukes of the Imperial House have contributed towards this result. The Emperor Paul established an institution called the Imperial Appanages, for the purpose of providing for the minor members of the reigning dynasty. However mad Paul may have been in some respects, he certainly showed great practical wisdom in looking after the material interests of his relatives and descendants. He started the Appanages Department as a special fund, which has now become a rich source of revenue derivable from many kinds of agricultural, industrial, and commercial operations. From this source the numerous Grand Dukes and Duchesses draw the means of maintaining their positions. Only the reigning Emperor and his heir-apparent do not draw upon this fund, as they have the Treasury, the State domains, and other sources of income. About thirteen years ago it was officially calculated that the Imperial Grand Dukes and Grand Duchesses—and it must be remembered that their number has been continually on the increase—had received from these



appanages during the course of a century altogether more than 236,000,000 roubles, or about £23,600,000. The greater part of this sum was, of course, expended in St. Petersburg, including nearly 57,000,000 roubles exclusively laid out in erecting and keeping up Grand Ducal palaces. There are now at least twenty palaces in St. Petersburg and the surrounding districts belonging to different members of the Imperial Family. Two or three of them have been converted into museums and other institutions, while it is a remarkable fact that many of the fine mansions of Russia's ancient but impoverished aristocracy have of late years been acquired by the Grand Dukes.

We thus see that even the collateral branches of the Imperial dynasty have been greatly instrumental in building up St. Petersburg. Their position at present is naturally very different from what it was before the State Dooma declared that none of the Grand Dukes should any longer hold any responsible posts under the Government. But before that they were all-powerful. Their convenience and pleasure were first considered in all cases, and St. Petersburg owes many of its public improvements to the fact that they were first introduced for the benefit of members of the Imperial Family.

## CHAPTER VII

### ST. PETERSBURG CRITICIZED

Russian, English, and other foreign criticism—The poet  
Pooshkin's description.

No other capital city in the world has ever been criticized as much as St. Petersburg. Russians themselves have always complained of its defects, and not without good reason. Foreigners also have given it a bad reputation, and its ruin has often been predicted. Its depreciation by English and other foreign writers, however, was more in fashion when Russophobia was rampant. Russian constitutional reform and popular liberty, although as yet existing more in principle than in practice, have taken the political sting out of foreign criticism. The evil spoken and written of St. Petersburg to-day is chiefly in reference to its inherent failings, which it must be admitted are very great. In spite of all its external splendour, it has come to be known as the unhealthiest and most expensive capital in Europe. It stands first among the large

cities of Europe, and even of Russia, both as regards the rate of mortality in general and the high death-rate from infectious diseases. Typhoid and cholera are the periodical scourges of its population. Since the thirties of the last century there have been seven outbreaks of cholera, and the epidemic has prevailed altogether no less than twenty-five years.

The foundations of public health have been too long neglected in favour of the outside glitter of modern civilization. Although the subject of sanitation has been under discussion for the last quarter of a century at least, there is still no proper drainage and no pure water-supply. St. Petersburg is now the fifth in point of size among the great capitals of Europe, with nearly 2,000,000 inhabitants, and yet this mass of humanity, in addition to the rigours of the climate and the insalubrity of the situation, is obliged to put up with primitive arrangements for the disposal of sewage which in these days constitute nothing less than a national scandal. These arrangements may be briefly referred to as a system of filthy cesspools in the back yard of all houses, with rough wooden carts to carry away the contents at night and pollute the atmosphere by the operation. At the same time,

as though this were not enough, the citizens are supplied with water which nobody valuing his or her life dares to drink unboiled, and which is drawn from a river contaminated by human dirt and teeming with bacteria and the vibriion of cholera. This is the Russian scientific opinion of the beautiful, fast-running, and limpid stream of the Neva during the cholera epidemic of 1909. What a contrast with the opinion enunciated eighty years ago by a distinguished English physician (Dr. Granville), who wrote, after a visit to St. Petersburg: 'After all, the best, the purest, the most grateful, the most healthy, the most delightful and really national beverage of the inhabitants of St. Petersburg is the water of the Neva.' This praise now reads like satire, for, in order to avoid Neva water altogether, many persons are paying a shilling a bottle for ordinary spring water, brought from Duderhoff, twenty miles outside the city.

Russian and foreign criticism of St. Petersburg has also proceeded from other points of view. It is curious that formerly the Muscovite Slavophile and the English Russophobe unconsciously joined hands in reviling it from very different motives. The one disliked it because it stood for everything foreign, and did not represent the real Russia; the other

abused it because it represented Autocratic Russia and the supposed enemy of British rule in India. In its early days it was so cordially hated by Russians themselves, especially by the priesthood, who regarded Peter the Great as Antichrist, that they loudly prophesied for it the fate of Babylon, Nineveh, and Gomorrah. During the terrible inundation in the reign of Alexander I., several fanatics of this class, who were undergoing imprisonment for their opposition, were drowned in their cells in the fortress. Even Karazin, the great Russian historian, called its foundation 'the immortal mistake of the great reformer.'

In order to show what kind of views were held by English and other foreign authors in the last half of the nineteenth century, it may be interesting to quote two or three passages.

About the time of the Crimean War, considerable importance was attached to a work called 'Revelations of Russia,' by an anonymous Englishman, long resident on the banks of the Neva. This author wrote that St. Petersburg was 'a city of barracks and palaces, a vast encampment of lath and plaster, the stuccoed walls of the buildings always peeling in the gripe of the keen frost of winter and blistering sun of summer, a city which each successive genera-

tion of its inhabitants had to build afresh by instalments of annual repairs, otherwise the marsh would again take its place, the stucco would become dust, the walls it covers ruins imbedded in the mud, and the cold, spongy moss of this northern climate would again creep over it. The prevalence of west winds such as, if rare, will probably occur once in a century or two, would suffice to raise the waters of the Gulf high enough to sweep away the devoted city. It will be remembered how nearly this happened in the reign of the first Alexander.' The Marquis Custrine wrote: 'This city, with its quays of granite, is a marvel, but the palace of ice in which the Empress Elizabeth held a banquet was no less a wonder, and lasted as long as the snowflakes—those roses of Siberia. The ancients built with indestructible materials beneath a conservative sky; here, where the climate destroys everything, are raised up palaces of wood, houses of planks, and temples of stucco. Russian workmen spend their lives in remaking during the summer what the winter has undone.' According to Count Vitzthum, Saxon *Chargé d'affaires* in Petersburg in 1853, 'the city, as seen from the majestic Neva, presents an imposing aspect when the golden domes of the Isaac Church are glittering brightly through the





ON THE ROAD TO EXECUTION IN FORMER DAYS

These public processions to the gallows have been suppressed for many years past





morning mist. The first impression, however, soon vanishes, for St. Petersburg, at all events in summer, notwithstanding its spacious but desolate squares, and its interminable, broad, but empty streets, bears, or then bore, in comparison with Paris and London, the stamp of a provincial town. In that sea of houses, raised by the will of a powerful ruler out of a bottomless morass, it is evident that soil and ground, as well as human life, have not yet the same value as in older capitals of natural growth.'

Less unfavourable views may, perhaps, be found in more recent descriptions; but, as a rule, both native and foreign critics have been far from complimentary towards the 'Palmyra of the North.' The best antidote to all adverse criticism of St. Petersburg has been given by Russia's greatest poet, Pooshkin. It is to be found in the prologue to his 'Bronze Cavalier,' and it is here offered to the reader in the excellent rendering into English made by the late Mr. Charles Turner, who was for many years English Lector at the University of St. Petersburg, and a friend of the author of these chapters:

' On the waste shore of raving waves  
He stood, with high and dread thoughts filled,

And gazed afar. Before him rolled  
 The river wide, a fragile barque  
 Its tortuous path slow making.  
 Upon the moss-grown banks and swamps  
 Stood far asunder smoky huts,  
 The homes of Finnish fishers poor ;  
 Whilst all around, a forest wild,  
 Unpierced by misty-circled sun,  
 Murmured loud.

‘ Gazing far, he thought :  
 From hence we can the Swede best threat ;  
 Here must I find a city strong,  
 That shall our haughty foe bring ill ;  
 It is by Nature’s law decreed,  
 That here we break a window through,  
 And boldly into Europe look,  
 And on the sea with sure foot stand ;  
 By water path as yet unknown,  
 Shall ships from distant ports arrive,  
 And far and wide our reign extend.

‘ A hundred years have passed, and now,  
 In place of forests dark and swamps,  
 A city new, in pomp unmatched,  
 Of Northern lands the pride and gem.  
 Where Finnish fisher once at eve,  
 Harsh Nature’s poor abandoned child,  
 From low-sunk boat was wont his net  
 With patient toil to cast, and drag  
 The stream, now stretch long lines of quays,  
 Of richest granite formed, and rows  
 Of buildings huge and lordly domes

The river front ; whilst laden ships  
From distant quarters of the world  
Our hungry wharves fresh spoils supply ;  
And needful bridge its span extends,  
To join the stream's opposing shores ;  
And islets gay, in verdure clad,  
Beneath the shade of gardens laugh.  
Before the youthful city's charms  
Her head proud Moscow jealous bends,  
As when the new Tsaritza young  
The widowed Empress lowly greets.

‘ I love thee, work of Peter's hand !  
I love thy stern symmetric form ;  
The Neva's calm and queenly flow  
Betwixt her quays of granite stone,  
With iron tracings richly wrought ;  
Thy nights so soft with pensive thought,  
Their moonless glow, in bright obscure,  
When I alone, in cosy room,  
Or write or read, night's lamp unlit ;  
The sleeping piles that clear stand out  
In lonely streets, and needle bright  
That crowns the Admiralty's spire ;  
When, chasing far the shades of night,  
In cloudless sky of golden pure,  
Dawn quick usurps the pale twilight,  
And brings to end her half-hour reign.  
I love thy winters, bleak and harsh ;  
Thy stirless air fast bound by frosts ;  
The flight of sledge o'er Neva wide,  
That glows the cheeks of maidens gay.  
I love the noise and chat of balls ;

A banquet free from wife's control,  
 Where goblets foam, and bright blue flame  
 Darts round the brimming punch-bowl's edge.  
 I love to watch the martial troops  
 The spacious Field of Mars fast scour ;  
 The squadrons spruce of foot and horse ;  
 The nicely chosen race of steeds,  
 As gaily housed they stand in line,  
 Whilst o'er them float the tattered flags ;  
 The gleaming helmets of the men  
 That bear the marks of battle-shot.  
 I love thee when with pomp of war  
 The cannons roar from fortress-tower ;  
 When Empress-Queen of all the North  
 Hath given birth to royal heir ;  
 Or when the people celebrate  
 Some conquest fresh on battle-field ;  
 Or when her bonds of ice once more  
 The Neva, rushing free, upheaves,  
 The herald sure of spring's rebirth.

' Fair city of the hero, hail!  
 Like Russia, stand unmoved and firm !  
 And let the elements subdued  
 Make lasting peace with thee and thine.  
 Let angry Finnish waves forget  
 Their bondage ancient and their feud ;  
 Nor let them, with their idle hate  
 Disturb great Peter's deathless sleep !'



COSSACKS OF THE GUARD AND IMPERIAL BODYGUARD





## CHAPTER VIII

### ST. PETERSBURG SOCIETY

Peter the Great's bureaucracy—Foreign influence—Government departments and official titles—Merchants—Hospitality—Social and political life—Court balls and ceremonies.

THE development of St. Petersburg society has been so powerfully influenced by the stamp of officialdom and bureaucracy first set upon it by Peter the Great, that, in order to understand its real character, we must again invoke the shade of the great reformer. His famous ukase compelling all persons of noble or gentle birth to serve the State, had very far-reaching effects on Russian life in general, and particularly on the formation of society in St. Petersburg. Those members of the superior classes who were unable to join the army were called upon to enter the Civil Service, which Peter organized on the plan suggested to him by the German philosopher Leibnitz. According to this system the government of the country was not carried on by individual ministers, but by

colleges or boards of administrators, and their transformation into the modern ministries was fully effected only in 1802. The present home of the University on the Vasiliefsky Ostroff was the original head-quarters of this organization, and the long red front of that building still shows the twelve architectural distinctions, which corresponded with the number of the so-called colleges.

Peter employed the most drastic measures against those who attempted to avoid becoming officers or *tchinovniks*.\* He even went so far as to threaten them with branding. The consequence was that all the gentry, who, until quite recent years, represented the one intelligent element of the population, were marshalled into the ranks of the Government service, and taken away from private enterprise. It is true that, under Peter III. or Catherine II., the compulsion in this matter was abolished, but what had once been a law had now become a fashion, and any other callings than those of an officer or an official came to be looked upon as unbecoming the position of a gentleman. This is the case, to a great extent, even at the present day. It is impossible to estimate the evil done by Peter in thus checking the development of the

\* *Tchin* = rank, grade.

natural resources of the Empire, for Russia then had no class of merchants to speak of, and the peasantry were in a state of serfdom, which precluded them from following any other career than that of tilling the land of their masters.

This system determined in an unmistakable manner the aspect of St. Petersburg society, developing it on quite different lines from those followed by the evolution of society in Moscow. There has always been a striking contrast in this and other respects between the old and new capitals. Moscow is Russia's commercial centre, and the merchant is a characteristic type of its leading class. St. Petersburg is a city of Government servants, civil and military, the great bureaucratic chancery of the Empire. There is hardly a street in it of any size or importance that does not contain one or more Government buildings or regimental barracks.

The influence of foreigners, who were the allies of the great Tsar in recasting Russia, has given to St. Petersburg the appearance of a foreign city. Until quite recently the principal commercial firms were foreign, and the real Russian merchant scarcely penetrated to the banks of the Neva. Owing to the impetus given by Peter the

Great, and to the fact that the Empire was ruled through a great part of the eighteenth century by sovereigns of foreign birth and extraction, the upper classes of society became in a great measure 'foreignized' in their predilections and outward habits. Everything was placed on a foreign basis. Few other cities in the world could vie with St. Petersburg in the matter of foreign institutions. The Press and the Drama were also established under alien influence, which has not even yet disappeared. There is still a French theatre, maintained out of the funds of the Imperial Court, and two foreign daily newspapers supported by the Imperial Government. The *Journal de St. Petersbourg*, in French, is the semi-official organ of the Russian Foreign Office, and the *St. Petersburger Zeitung*, in German, still bears the Imperial Arms on its title-page, in token of its official origin. Both journals have the privilege of drawing revenue from the publication of judicial notices and advertisements.

In spite of a repeatedly professed resolve to introduce measures of decentralization, the Government has, nevertheless, become more and more centralized, and the number of officials has in consequence been increased. It would probably





COURT BALL.

The Emperor leading the Empress through the ball-room

be no exaggeration to say that they now number very many thousands.

St. Petersburg society is deeply interested in Government departments and official titles. This interest is manifested in the existence of a numerous class of 'attachés' to different ministries, whose occupation, if any, may be anything but the performance of official duties. One seldom meets a man of moderate education and position who does not possess some Civil Service rank. If an Englishman's dream is a title, a Frenchman's the red ribbon of the Legion d'Honneur, it may be said that the ambition of a Petersburgian Russian is to obtain the rank of Actual State Councillor, which confers upon him the privileges of hereditary nobility, and the right of being addressed as 'Excellency.' It has become common to meet merchants, traders, directors of banks, and industrial managers with the Civil Service titles of 'college secretary,' or councillor, and other grades of Peter's table of ranks. This feature pertains, more or less, to all classes of Russians, excepting the humble peasantry, but it pervades St. Petersburg society to a degree unknown in other parts of the Empire. The great merchant families of Moscow are represented, as a rule, by men who remain true to the



original calling of their fathers. In St. Petersburg, on the contrary, the sons of considerable merchants are pretty sure to be found abandoning the business of their sires in order to take to scribbling in some Government department.

Russian bureaucracy, be it said, is highly democratic. Among the actual bureaucrats—that is to say, the officials actually employed in the various departments—are to be met Princes and Counts belonging to the best families of the realm side by side with the sons of the humblest class of the community. These latter are the ‘sons of cooks,’ whose accession to the privileges of education gave so much uneasiness to the late M. Katkoff, the famous editor of the *Moscow Gazette*.

As already indicated, the type of a St. Petersburg merchant is a foreigner, or a Russian subject of alien race. In fact, a great part of the Vasiliefsky Ostroff—Vasili, or Basil Island—is populated chiefly by foreigners engaged in commerce, and foreign speech, mostly German, may be heard on all sides. This important district abounds in many other details of foreign urban life, such as German beer-houses, and German shops of every description; and if it were not for the majestic buildings of the Academies of Science and Arts, and the historical

mansion of Prince Menshikoff, the present location of the Cadet Corps, on the one hand, and the labourers and droshky drivers on the other, a man of vivid imagination might easily fancy that he was in a German town.

There are not many very wealthy people in St. Petersburg, judging according to English ideas. Circumstances and conditions do not favour the accumulation of riches on any very extensive scale. The remuneration of a Russian official is not very high, and life and amusements in the capital are very expensive. Nevertheless, the Russian will have his pleasures at any cost, and he strongly objects to economy and thrift. Many Russian social usages in general have, of course, been adopted in St. Petersburg, the most agreeable of them all being a very generous hospitality. A Russian is always glad to entertain a guest. Improvised visits, therefore, without any previous invitation, form one of the most characteristic traits of Russian life. Absence of social ceremony is the keynote among the middle classes. From this point of view there is great freedom in St. Petersburg society, and for that matter in Russian society in general. Russian social life has hitherto been free and unconventional inversely to its want of political

liberty. Having been debarred from all political life, the Russians have devoted their best energies to really enjoying themselves socially. The author hesitates to consider the possible changes which may eventually result from the present transitory period of dawning political freedom; but although Russia has now been placed in a very fair way towards coming up level with Western nations in the matter of political institutions, yet one can still go to a theatre in St. Petersburg in a morning coat or any other decent attire and present tickets for boxes or stalls without any risk of being turned away at the doors. And if you are invited to an ordinary dinner and omit to put on evening dress, your host and hostess, as well as any other guests, will probably be all the more pleased with you on that very account. This, of course, would not apply to comparatively small aristocratic circles, where foreign manners and customs have become a second nature. The English custom of dressing for dinner may also be gradually spreading, but to the ordinary educated Russian evening dress is still more a civilian's uniform in which to pay official visits, generally early in the morning, attend great ceremonies, and make formal calls at Easter and on New Year's Day.



EASTER DAY  
Presenting Easter eggs



The events of 1905 and the two following years have had their effect on the life of St. Petersburg. A unanimous outcry for reform has been the result, and the 'renovation' of Russia has become the watchword of a new era. All classes now understand the power and the methods of organization. New parties and factions are constantly springing up both inside and outside of the Dooma. If it were not for the severe restrictions put upon trade and professional unions, St. Petersburg, as well as the country at large, would swarm with these and similar combinations. The normal articles of association allowed by the Government for all such bodies debar them from touching on politics in the remotest way. Unfortunately, few of them are able to avoid altogether this forbidden ground, and the least thing which can be construed into a tendency in the wrong direction is immediately seized upon as a justification for cutting short their existence. The well-known Literary Fund of St. Petersburg, for example, was recently suppressed simply for having given alms or a small pension to the distressed families of one or two Socialists.

Public attention, which was formerly almost entirely engrossed in social scandal and gossip, is



now kept occupied by politics, political duels, intrigues, and quarrels. Social life is also enlivened in a new way during the winter months by parliamentary receptions and political dinners. Even the droshky driver and the *moozhik* have begun to read their daily paper. The newspaper press and publishers generally have not been slow in taking advantage of the altered situation to deluge the city with cheap and sensational literature. There is now a popular political journal called the *Kopeck*, which, as its name implies, is being sold for the amazingly low price of a kopeck, or one farthing, per number. Its increasing circulation has already reached a quarter of a million copies daily. This probably beats the world's record of cheap and enterprising journalism.

Another very remarkable change has come over the scene in regard to the Imperial Grand Dukes, who have quite lost their former predominance, and have completely disappeared from public view. On the other hand, the agrarian disorders and plundering of provincial mansions have led to the sale of estates in the interior, and the settlement of many former landlords in St. Petersburg.

The prolonged absence of the Imperial Court

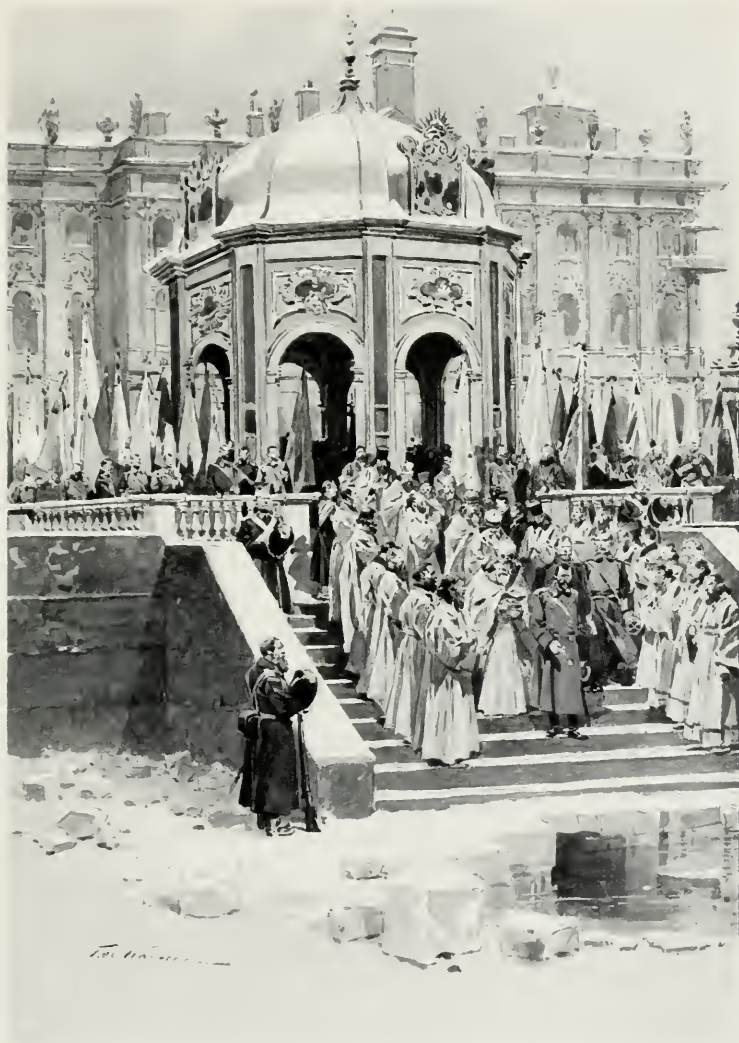


from St. Petersburg has been a great loss to society and trade. One almost begins to forget the brilliant Court ceremonies and entertainments which used to be the chief attraction of the fashionable season in the Russian capital. These, however, will soon be resumed on their traditional scale of magnificence, when the Imperial Family return to take up residence in town again, instead of continuing to pass the winters in retirement at Tsarskoe Selo.

It is the custom of the Tsar to open the season in January by a grand ball in the great halls of the Winter Palace. This first ball is generally attended by some 2,000 persons. All the men present, with perhaps one or two exceptions, display the most gorgeous and varied uniforms, which glitter with a dazzling assortment of orders and decorations, while the ladies wear on their heads the old Russian *kokoshnik*, ornamented with pearls. There is no Court dress for civilians who have no rank, and a solitary example of black evening dress in the midst of such a showy multitude is at once a very conspicuous object. Then follow, during the period beginning with the New Year and ending with Lent, a whole series of Court festivities, at each of which there is a diminished number of

guests. The selection is made by confining the invitations each time to officials of higher rank and position, until only the very highest dignitaries are, as a rule, asked to the last parties of the season. On all these occasions, and especially at the great balls, their Imperial Majesties lead off the dancing in a stately manner, as shown in one of the illustrations in this volume. Afterwards, at supper-time, when the great assembly has been accommodated in groups at round tables in the midst of a profusion of palms and flowers, the Emperor leaves the table, at which His Majesty sups with the Empress and other members of his family, and walks through the immense halls to see that all his guests are comfortably seated and served. When the vast company disperses after midnight, many of the departing guests pluck flowers from the tables as souvenirs of the evening. These festive gatherings round the Imperial Family, as well as the different *sorties* and military parades inside and outside the palace, are magnificent spectacles.

One of the most picturesque of such ceremonies is that of the Blessing of the Waters on January 6, the Feast of the Epiphany, which takes place in a temporary pavilion, erected on the edge of the Neva, right in front of the Winter Palace. Here,



BLESSING THE NEVA

Emperor and Metropolitan at the blessing of the water of the Neva on the  
Feast of the Epiphany, January 6 (old style)



surrounded by white-robed priests, and soldiers with all the colours of the regiments in garrison, the Tsar witnesses the immersion of the Metropolitan's cross in the river through a hole cut in the thick ice. His Majesty is then supposed to take a drop of the water thus consecrated.

Many years ago, when Nicholas II. was heir-apparent, his English tutor, the late Mr. Charles Heath, ventured to remonstrate with His Imperial Highness for wishing to drink raw water on one of these occasions, in view of the contamination of the Neva, in the opinion of Russian doctors. But there is another danger connected with this ceremony, and that is on account of long exposure, without movement, to the extreme cold, which nearly always prevails at this time of the winter. Everybody present, including the Sovereign and the crowds kept at a distance by the police, have to remain bareheaded the whole time. The ceremonial is a long one, and full parade uniform has to be worn, if possible, without overcoats. For these reasons the Imperial ladies and foreign diplomatists look on from behind double windows in the comfortable warmth of the Winter Palace. Some persons have been known to wear wigs on this occasion as a substitute for their caps. It was at one of these

ceremonies that Peter the Great caught the final cold which brought on his death. The great reformer had already contracted a severe chill while rescuing drowning sailors at the mouth of the river, and yet with his customary determination he insisted upon going out to the Blessing of the Waters. The consequence was that he immediately afterwards took to his bed, and never got up again. Such drawbacks there certainly are to some of the outdoor functions; but, to sum up the life of the Court as a whole, it may be truly said that Russian Imperial ceremony and hospitality are provided on a lavish and gigantic scale, and in a setting of luxury and splendour such as cannot be surpassed, or perhaps even equalled, by any other Court in Europe.



## CHAPTER IX

### ST. PETERSBURG 'HURRYING UP'

Its insalubrity—Impending sanitation—Contaminated water—  
Increased activity—Electric trams—Police and traffic—  
Changes and improvements—Shops—Sports.

FOR reasons mentioned in the preceding chapter, many changes have been going on in St. Petersburg since the beginning of the new century. Russia's breakdown in the Far East, and her 'liberating movement' at home, imparted a stimulus to developments which were previously held in check, and the effects of these are now becoming more and more manifest.

But of all the changes now taking place, or yet to come, none can compare in vital importance for St. Petersburg with the proposed work of sanitation, which is the one thing above all others needed in the interest of public health on the banks of the Neva. At last the city of Peter the Great is really destined to be endowed with the advantages of an up-to-date system of drainage and a good supply



of pure water. Since reference was made to this subject in Chapter VII., and while this book has been passing through the press, the Russian Cabinet of Ministers have introduced a Bill into the State Dooma for obtaining compulsory powers to compel the adoption of these two indispensable requirements of every great modern aggregation of human beings. The preamble of the measure constitutes a severe condemnation of the existing state of things, and an indictment equally severe of the City Dooma for having so long failed to establish a remedy. For instance, it is pointed out that in 1908 the mortality (44,311) exceeded the births (44,133) by 178 cases, and that no less than 19,487 children died under the age of five, or 44 per cent. of the total number of deaths.

The very complexion of the great bulk of the inhabitants of St. Petersburg points to unhealthy conditions of existence. How can a robust look be expected from a population brought up on a swampy, often inundated soil, only three or four feet above sea-level in many places, and which for the past 200 years has been gradually undergoing saturation with all kinds of filth. For this reason the winter is regarded as the healthiest time of the year, when the surface of land and water is frozen



A RUSSIAN WET NURSE



hard, and the microbes are rendered less active. The case is made worse by the fact of the water-supply being contaminated at its very source. One fails to understand how it could ever have been supposed that the water would be anything else but contaminated if taken out, as it is at present, from a part of the River Neva within the city bounds, where the dirt and refuse from mills, factories, villages, cemeteries, and barges are floated down from up-stream, right over the intake in front of the waterworks. Besides this, the filters constructed in recent years have turned out defective and inadequate, so that they, too, it seems, are now polluted even more than the river itself.

Confronted with ugly facts like these, which have been forced home by the lingering cholera epidemic of 1908-1909, the new constitutional Government has been roused to a sense of responsibility for the health of the Imperial Metropolis, and thanks to the Prime Minister Stolypin the sanitary reform of St. Petersburg is no longer 'beyond the hills,' as the Russian expression goes; it has been raised from the level of merely local interest to the higher plane of questions of national importance. The only drawback to the prospect is the enormous expense which the

work will entail. To begin with, a small loan of 100,000,000 roubles—about three and a quarter times more than the annual municipal budget—will be required, which will have to be paid off by the citizens in the shape of fresh and increased taxation, and this can only tend to make living in the Russian capital more expensive than ever.

St. Petersburg is probably the only city in Europe, or perhaps in the world, where danger-signals in the form of placards with glaring red letters are posted up on house-fronts, inside tramcars, and in most places of public resort, warning all and sundry against drinking raw water. There must be thousands of the inhabitants who have never in their lives tasted ordinary water in a natural state, and never will, for when they find themselves in localities where the water is perfectly pure and wholesome, they still take it only boiled from sheer force of habit and fear. The samovar and kettle are in request from morning till night, and many persons are afraid to wash their faces in water not first boiled. In cholera times free drinks of boiled water may be had from huge boilers wheeled about the streets and from cans, barrels, etc., placed inside and outside certain shops, institutions, at railway-stations, and so forth. In fact, when there is more than

the usual danger from cholera and typhoid, a great deal of the time and energy of the local authorities is expended in trying to make the inhabitants drink boiled water, and keep themselves clean. Nevertheless, the lowest and most ignorant class of the people, especially those coming from the provinces, have the greatest contempt for cholera and for all precautions taken against it. In their humble opinion the scourge is nothing else but the infernal doings of the devil, or the diabolical work of the doctors. A sprinkling of chloride of lime for disinfecting purposes has been taken by Russians of this sort for the cholera in its visible and tangible form. And the author has seen dirty workmen slake their thirst with water dipped out in their greasy caps from the foulest canals of the city, while cautionary notices just described were staring them full in the face only a few yards off. Only education can, of course, gradually change the uncultured habits of the lower orders, but much can be done meanwhile to minimize the evils of their present state of ignorance by the introduction of such sanitary measures as those now decided upon by the Central Government.

Down to the time when the Japanese struck the blow which gave Russia the greatest shock since



the onslaught of the Tartars under Chengis Khan, or the invasion by Napoleon, St. Petersburg continued to go on as usual, lagging far behind all its Western contemporaries. Foreign crazes like bridge, diablo, and American jig-saw puzzles, caught on fast enough, but the adoption of serious improvements and conveniences of civilization has been a terribly slow process. One had to go to Berlin to get into touch with the real life of Western Europe. St. Petersburg has always had to yield the palm in this respect to the German capital, which so astonished everybody by its rapid and marvellous transformation after the Franco-Prussian War. Unfortunately, Russia, unlike Germany, has never received any milliards of money to spend on the needs of her Northern capital, not even as the result of her most successful campaigns; and the 'City Fathers' of St. Petersburg have never been able to cope successfully with all the difficulties of a rather difficult situation. It may be advanced on their behalf that the civic authority lost its nerve, from the very first, under the overruling influence of the all-powerful Gradonatchalnik,\* the 'head' or 'chief of the city,' who, according to old

\* *Gorod, grad* = town, city; *natchalnik* = chief, principal.







NEVSKY PROSPECT

Before the days of electric trams

autocratic regulations, may exercise the right of veto and dictation whenever he considers that circumstances call for his interference. The consequence is that the position of a mayor of St. Petersburg, when viewed in the light of that of an English Lord Mayor, or a German Burgomeister, is a relatively insignificant one, and the prestige of the municipal body suffers accordingly. Under the so-called 'temporary' administrative regulations for preserving public order, the Gradonatchalnik still possesses very considerable arbitrary powers, but it is hoped that as soon as the new state of things introduced theoretically by recent constitutional reforms is allowed full scope of action, Russian municipal institutions will be able to play a more independent and important part in the life of the nation.

Apart from the energetic steps taken by the Imperial Government to urge on the City Corporation in the matter of sanitation, St. Petersburg, since the beginning of the latest reform period in 1905, has been 'hurrying up' in many other ways. Persons who have watched it for many years past are conscious that its pulse now beats far quicker than ever it did before. There is no doubt that the establishment in its midst of a legislative assembly

of representatives from all parts of such a vast and diversified Empire as that of Russia has greatly added to the life and animation of the city. Within the last decade, nay, even within the last five years, great changes have come over the aspect of things in the streets. Any observer who remembers what the Neva capital was like only a very few years since cannot fail to be struck with the evident increase of population and activity. Less than ten years ago it could still be said with a certain amount of truth that St. Petersburg consisted of only two main avenues, towards which everybody seemed to gravitate—the Nevsky Prospect and Great Morskaia Street—the Oxford and Regent Streets of the Russian capital. To-day many other important thoroughfares, such as the Sadovaya and Gorokhovaya Streets, and the Litainy, Soovorofsky and Voznesensky Prospects, are equally busy and crowded arteries of traffic. The crowds also have considerably mended their pace, which was formerly a crawling one in comparison with the bustling throngs in other European capitals.

The most remarkable of the new features of outdoor life in St. Petersburg are those resulting from the successful operation of the new electric trams, which, since they began to replace the old

horse traction at the end of 1907, have accelerated locomotion to a degree little short of producing a revolution amongst easy-going pedestrians and careless droshky drivers. They seem to have stimulated the life of the city in general. They are also enabling the population to spread out wider afield, away from the congested and expensive centre, for the sake of cheaper house accommodation. The city, which, without its suburbs, covers an area of about forty square miles of land and water, is now being supplied in all directions with neatly appointed electric trams. Only a few of the old horse tram-cars are still running, while on the lines extending to the remoter outskirts of the city steam-traction has long been in use. The public are taking the fullest advantage of the new method, for it offers the only expeditious means of locomotion combined with cheapness, with the exception of about a dozen motor-buses, there being no overhead metropolitan railway, and, considering the nature of the ground, it is not likely there will ever be any twopenny tubes. During the busy hours of the day the new cars are everywhere overcrowded with strap-hangers, and it is not unusual to see as many as fifty or sixty tramcars at one time along the Nevsky Prospect, a thoroughfare as wide as Portland

Place, running right through the heart of the capital for over two miles.

It was not, however, without considerable sacrifice of life and limb that this improvement in the means of getting about St. Petersburg was effected, for people were knocked down and killed or injured every day for many months until the population had been drilled into the new system of 'hurrying up.' The drivers of the new electric cars had also to be trained not to endanger the lives of the public by giving too much rein to the national temperament for indulging in extremes. Finding that instead of the former exertion of whipping up jaded horses, the mere touch of a small handle sufficed to produce the necessary movement, these men began to send their new electric cars whizzing through the streets at the speed of express trains, and in trying to stop short in front of a droshky or *lomovoi* across the track the passengers inside the car were generally thrown all of a heap, or jerked right off their seats. The casualties and confusion resulting from this innovation led to another novel arrangement, which had never before been seen in systematic operation on Russian streets—namely, the regulation of the traffic by the police. The universal renown of the London constable's uplifted hand had, of course,





A DISH OF TEA FROM A SAMOVAR

The samovar is used in private houses only, and never for workmen in the *traktirs* or teashops of St. Petersburg





reached St. Petersburg, and it was resolved to attempt something of the kind with the Russian policeman, who, with all his good qualities, was apt to turn away in disgust from any entanglement of traffic, leaving the drivers of colliding vehicles to curse and swear at one another to their hearts' content. But no respect for the mere hand of a policeman in Russia could be expected from a people whose endless struggles against oppressive officialism have taught them to regard its representatives as natural enemies. The passport system alone is enough to account for this unfortunate state of feeling. Any police force in the world having to administer such a system of annoyances, not to say cruelties, would infallibly incur the odium of the public upon whom they were inflicted. So it was decided to give the St. Petersburg policeman standing at important street crossings another symbol of authority in addition to the arsenal of weapons which he already carries on his person. This is a wooden truncheon painted white, of the kind used, the author believes, by the French police in Paris, but first brought out by the old London police as organized in the days of Sir Robert Peel. The Russian *gorodovoi* is now being trained to overawe reckless drivers and chauffeurs by holding

this staff up before their astonished gaze instead of joining them, as was formerly his wont, in gesticulating and swearing, and occasionally, when nobody in particular was looking in his direction, giving a very impertinent *izvostchik* a 'dig in the ribs' with the hilt of his sword. The latter being loosely slung from the shoulder, he is able at close quarters to use it in this way without taking it out of the scabbard. But the new duty is not yet congenial to him, and he is performing it in a somewhat perfunctory manner. In most cases, however, an officer close by has got him under control, and, with the adaptability of Russian nature, he will soon get accustomed to the innovation. At the same time, this is not all that had to be done to put order into the new evolution of things on the streets. And here came into operation the paramount authority of the Gradonatchalnik, who happened to be the present energetic and capable holder of that office, General Dratchefsky. In his name imperious instructions, threats of condign punishment, orders of arrest, and lists of fines, often amounting in the aggregate to many thousands of roubles a week, were launched forth from the Prefecture daily. Only in this way can proper respect be secured for new regulations in

Russia. A simple police notice with 'By order' written at the bottom would produce no effect whatever.

Other remarkable changes and improvements have signalized the first few years of the new political era. For one thing, there has been a great extension of electric lighting and the use of other bright illuminants, although in the suburbs and on the edges of the city kerosene is still used in many of the streets. All the principal thoroughfares are now brilliantly lighted at night, and, weather permitting, present a very gay and lively appearance. In winter the effect is heightened by the reflection from the snow and the frequent flashing of blue sparks from the overhead conductors as the contact rods of the tramcars slide along them. On the other hand, the character of winter locomotion has been modified in another way not so pleasing. St. Petersburg has been the last of great European cities to be invaded on an extensive scale by motor carriages, taxi-cabs, and other motor vehicles, which, together with the electric tramways, have simply transformed it in the cold season from a quiet into a noisy city. Formerly every kind of conveyance, with few exceptions, was put upon runners in the winter, and not a sound was to be heard as the

sledges glided noiselessly over the hard snow-covered roads. All this is now being rapidly changed by the latest application of modern motive power. Unfortunately it is not possible to make a motor sledge without wheels, and even if it were, we should still have the noise of the other appliances of the motor vehicle. In short, the buzzing and rushing of electric tramcars, the throbbing of motors and snorting and piping of motor-horns and whistles, have become almost as great a nuisance in St. Petersburg as they are in the older cities of the West.

Another notable development, adding to the architectural embellishment of the two principal streets and to the advantage of the community in other respects, has taken place of late in the insurance and banking businesses of St. Petersburg, the increasing prosperity of which may be inferred from the construction of many handsome and palatial buildings for office accommodation, in spite of revolutionary troubles and "expropriations." Nevertheless, as the outlying portions of the town are approached, we may still see large numbers of wretched old wooden houses of 100 years ago, jammed in, as it were, between the larger modern buildings of brick and stucco.



PUBLIC SLEDGE, HALFPENNY FARE





A variation has also begun to show itself in the peculiar tendency of St. Petersburg to multiply indefinitely the enormous number of its small and badly aired shops, many of them having their floors much below the level of the pavement. Nothing gives such a good idea of the addictedness of the Russians to small trading, and of their lack of the enterprise necessary to build up large retail businesses, as the great extent of the petty shopkeeping still carried on in St. Petersburg. Had it not been for Imperial prohibitions against trading in some of the more aristocratic parts of the city in the early days of its existence, there would probably not be a single house or street to-day without some kind of small shop. As it is, there are few houses and streets without them. One or two big firms, like Elisayeff Brothers and Tcherepenikoff, have long been famous as very large dealers in all kinds of fruit and native and foreign dainties, but the creation of a Russian Maple, Shoolbred, Waring, or Peter Robinson, seems at present to be rather a remote possibility. Still, as already mentioned, there are signs of a change in this respect. It would seem that capital is beginning to find its way into retail trading, as a number of large stylish establishments, and one or two huge stores, espe-

cially one belonging to the Army and Navy Co-operative Society, have lately sprung into existence.

A walk in the streets, after an absence of about five years, discloses also an extraordinary development of much-patronized cinematograph shows and cafés, the latter being a business in which St. Petersburg was, until quite recently, very deficient. There is, furthermore, the introduction of the English system of pictorial bill-posting, with many of the posters evidently printed after English models, which is a novelty for St. Petersburg, where public advertising is still in its infancy. St. Petersburg has also only just made acquaintance with the "sandwich-man" and the shoeblick, the latter plying his craft only during the summer months, as boots are kept clean in winter by the wearing of goloshes. For some reason or other, before the revolutionary outbreak, every attempt to establish these two street occupations ended in failure.

Last, but not least, reference must not be omitted to the great growth of interest in gymnastics and outdoor sport, taking into account, of course, the difficulties of climate and the long northern winters. St. Petersburg has been inoculated with this interest chiefly by Englishmen and Swedes, and only persons intimately acquainted with Russian life can

understand what it spells in the way of change of habits among the younger generation in such enervating conditions as those prevailing in St. Petersburg. A certain number of the inhabitants have always been partial to hunting and shooting in a very comfortable fashion over the surrounding country, being cordially joined in this by the numerous German residents. Skating and snow-shoeing have also increased, but the St. Petersburg Russian has generally been averse to unnecessary exertion of any kind. It is not a little surprising, therefore, to see great excitement over football matches between the large number of clubs and school teams organized for this game which have lately come into existence, and the great attention given to their doings by the native press. In fact most British games, except cricket, are now coming into fashion. This is all the more remarkable when it is remembered that not many years since football and cricket matches played by members of the British colony in St. Petersburg were regarded with astonishment, and referred to with derision by Russian parents and schoolboys. The war with Japan and contact with the practitioners of jiu-jitsu have changed all that. Wrestling matches are now very popular.

## CHAPTER X

### TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF ST. PETERSBURG

Peasant element—Migration into and out of the city—Summer workmen—Barracks and Government buildings—Working population—Lomovoi—Izvostchik—Dvornik—Policeman.

THE great capitals of Europe have now become so much alike in all the chief manifestations of city life and activity that the foreign traveller from one to the other, once he has noticed the racial differences between their respective inhabitants, is rarely struck by any other remarkable peculiarities. He finds similar fashions in dress, similar vehicles, and much the same manners and customs in all of them. St. Petersburg, however, has not yet gone quite as far as this along the lines of modern uniformity. It still exhibits characteristics of another world existing outside, although the immediate aim of its foundation over 200 years ago was precisely to make it a model European city, and through its influence to Europeanize Russia. Survivals of a more remote and ruder state of things



A RUSSIAN SERVANT IN SUMMER DRESS



have not all been swept away by the spurt of progress and improvement during the last few years. The immense inert mass of peasantry in the far-reaching provinces, from which the strength of St. Petersburg is continually recruited, were too much for the enterprise of a single reformer, although a man of such commanding genius and energy as Peter the Great. The drastic measures and expeditious methods which that great sovereign employed to make his subjects look and act like other Europeans had no effect upon the conservative peasant. Peter was only able to cut off the beards and trailing skirts of his courtiers and officials, and in general to remodel the manners of the old boyars. He did this pretty effectually for the upper classes, because they were too small in number and too closely interested to offer any effective resistance ; but he was naturally quite unable to reform the millions of stolid peasantry, whose descendants to-day continue to leaven the results of his work in St. Petersburg by constituting over 60 per cent. of its total population. The number of inhabitants of the peasant category in 1900, at the time of the last census, was 61 per cent. People of this class visit the city for temporary employment, or they settle there as traders, petty shopkeepers, salesmen,



drivers, carters, domestic servants (the latter alone being computed at about 200,000 persons), porters, dockers, workmen and labourers of all kinds, and also beggars.

A great change has come over the predilections of this class of Russians since the results of their emancipation began to induce them to desert their wretched villages in favour of St. Petersburg, where so many of them find early graves. In the first years of the capital the severest pains and penalties had to be enforced to deter them from running away after they had been brought into the city under compulsion; now nothing can keep them from gravitating towards it in ever increasing numbers. The rapid growth of the population of St. Petersburg is mainly due to this influx of the rural element. According to the municipal census ten years ago, the inhabitants who had come from the provinces constituted 69 per cent. of the population, so that less than one third of the citizens were native born.

There is also an annual migratory movement in connection with St. Petersburg which is peculiar. It is calculated that some 100,000 workmen of the peasant class come into the city regularly every spring, and leave it every autumn. These are the

bricklayers, masons, carpenters, plasterers, and other handicraftsmen, mostly in the building trades, who come to work on new houses and to repair old ones, which in many cases have suffered from the severities of the northern winters. They may be seen any summer evening tramping in straggling crowds along the main thoroughfares, going to their short night's rest in holes and corners which serve them as lodgings in the densely populated Alexander Nevsky and Rozjdestvensky wards. Or glimpses of them may be had through the windows of *traktirs*, or tea-houses, where these workmen sip weak tea and listen to the gramophone. As a rule, the police keep them to the roadways, when they appear in any numbers, on account of their clothes, which are often mere rags covered with the dirt of their work, and perhaps also because of the unpleasant odour from Russians of this class. It occasionally happens that perfumes have to be used after them in rooms and palaces, especially in winter, when it is too cold outside to air the apartments by opening the windows. And yet the Russian workman, in one respect, is very clean. He generally goes once a week to a public bath, where he scalds himself in the steaming chamber, and he may also have his body thrashed

with birch twigs until his skin becomes the colour of a boiled lobster. This is a kind of massage, of very ancient origin, and peculiar to Russia in combination with the popular bath. The only objectionable circumstance is that the peasant or labourer wears the same clothes until they get too dirty, and somehow or other he cannot be induced to keep them the least bit clean.

As the workmen trudge to and from their occupations many of them may be seen carrying in their girdles their beloved axes, the favourite Russian implement, with which a peasant can make almost anything in wood without any other tool, from a log hut down to a child's toy. Being a denizen of a woody country, the Russian is naturally skilful in all manner of practical wood-work. The writer has seen a perfectly going wooden watch made by a Russian peasant, with the mechanism all of wood excepting the springs.

The nomadic character of a great many of these 'hewers of wood and drawers of water' may be verified by a visit to any one of the four big railway stations late in the autumn, when large crowds of rough and grimy peasants day after day besiege the ticket offices, and sit about for hours on their





OFFICER AND SENTINEL

dirty bundles, waiting for cheap trains to take them back to their villages.

An event contributing towards this movement into and out of the capital is the annual gathering of recruits at the different military stations. The conscripts of St. Petersburg city and province are sorted out every November in the large military riding-schools, and after having had their backs chalked like so many cattle, to indicate the regiments to which they have been allotted, they are marched off triumphantly through the streets to their respective barracks, headed by lively military music.

The large garrison of St. Petersburg, some 20,000 or 30,000 strong, has recently been the subject of discussion in the native Press with regard to the advisability of removing the many barracks, which occupy so much valuable space, to some suitable locality outside the city. This would allow of cheap and decent housing accommodation being provided for the poorer classes, who are very much in need of it. There are barracks and military schools in nearly all parts of St. Petersburg. Many streets are almost entirely taken up by them. In one part of the city, where the Izmailofsky guards are quartered, a whole series of



streets are named *roti*,\* and numbered after the different companies of that regiment. In order to give the reader an idea as to how far there is justification for the view that St. Petersburg is a 'city of barracks and Government offices,' it will suffice to quote the following figures, showing the estimated value of house property on the banks of the Neva. Government and official buildings are valued altogether at 876 million roubles, private buildings at 936 million, and municipal buildings at 140 million roubles. Therefore the value of buildings belonging to the Government is over 45 per cent. of the total.

There is also a migration of factory hands and other workers into St. Petersburg for winter employment, and out of it again in spring for field labour. If these men remained all the time in their snowed-up villages, they would do little else but sleep on their brick stoves at home. Of course, there is likewise a permanent factory population, for St. Petersburg is now one of the largest industrial cities in the world. These permanent workers in mills and factories are the men whom the ill-fated priest, Father Gapon, made use of, and who helped the revolutionists to

\* *Roti* = companies or squads of soldiers.



bring matters to a political crisis in 1905. Their places of abode are principally along the banks of the upper stream of the Neva, among the many large mills and works in the outskirts of the city. They present a very ugly and forbidding appearance when seen in large crowds, and they continue to give the authorities no little anxiety in regard to the future. The total number of factory workers in St. Petersburg and its surroundings cannot be far short of 200,000, and with their families there are probably about 400,000 persons, which is about one-fifth of the entire population.

The industrial and trading importance of St. Petersburg being such as it is, one would expect to find it furnished with the best means of transport, quite apart from the gradual 'motorization' of its traffic in common with other European cities. As a matter of fact, leaving out of account a few commercial motor vans and lorries recently introduced, the conveyances still widely used for the carriage of heavy goods are of the most nondescript and antediluvian kind. Some of them look as though they might have been introduced by the Huns, or any other barbarian invaders of the early centuries. They are all inseparably associated with one of the four principal

street types of St. Petersburg—the *lomovoi izvóstchik*, or carter. The other three types, the *legkovoi izvóstchik*, or droshky driver, the *dvornik*, or yard porter, and the *gorodovoi*, or policeman, will be referred to subsequently.

The *lomovoi izvóstchik* is not much seen in places like the Nevsky Prospect, or the Palace Quay, for in such fashionable quarters he is prohibited as a nuisance; but off the central thoroughfares you may see any number of his class with their small loads on very strange and dirty wheeled contrivances, slowly wending their way in Eastern caravan fashion, and interfering considerably with the rest of the traffic, especially with anybody in a hurry. Their *telyegi*, or carts, if they may be dignified with the name, consist of one or two beams laid across a couple of axletrees fitted with two small and two larger wheels. Goods are roped straight on to this primitive conveyance, or it supports a detached and very rough sort of receptacle like a trough, or a box, which is simply pushed over into the road when the contents have to be unloaded. On sledge roads in winter these superstructures are simply placed on runners. Like other Russian vehicles of peasant origin, the shafts are fastened or lashed to the axles or boxes of the

wheels, and the other ends of the shafts are made fast to the inevitable *doogá*, which arches over the horse's head. There is no seat for the driver, who either walks at the side, or else lies down on his load and often sleeps on it, while his miserable-looking horse instinctively follows behind its companions. As Russians colonize only in whole villages, never as isolated individuals, so also the *lomovoi*, with his cart, never moves alone if he can possibly help it. He believes strongly in the virtue and safety of numbers, and goes through the streets, as a rule, in one long file of fifty or more together.

These Russian carters present a typical scene when they stop in some by-street to get their half-pint bottles of *vodka*, or gin, at one of the Government spirit stores. Not being allowed to drink it on the premises, they toss off the *vodka* in the street, and return the empty bottles to the shopman. Having first removed the sealing-wax from the cork, the latter is made to fly out by a smart rap with the flat of the hand on the bottom of the bottle, and the contents are then poured down the gullet with the head held back without once pausing to take breath. Russians of the educated classes also have a peculiar way of taking

*vodka*, which they literally throw down their throats out of small liqueur glasses, in order to enjoy the effects of it without having the taste.

The most conspicuous of all the types of street-life in St. Petersburg is the *legkovoi izvóstchik*,\* the Russian cabman, more commonly called simply *izvóstchik*. He is generally the first to attract the stranger's attention, for he lies in wait for all newcomers at every available point, and thrusts the offer of his services upon them with persevering insistence. Formerly he and his competitors used to surround you at railway stations, theatres, etc., pull at your coat-sleeves, and argue with you in the most persuasive manner. This habit of pestering foot passengers at such close quarters is now seldom indulged in, as the police regulations warn the *izvóstchik* off the pavements, and compel him to keep to his seat. The *droshky*, on which he sits and waits in every street (there being no regular cab-ranks), is a small barouche, or victoria, with more of a pony than a horse in the shafts. In its present form, with rubber tyres and lifting hood for rainy weather, it presents a great improvement on what it was twenty-five years ago, when George Augustus Sala described it as a perambulator on

\* *Lyogki* = light, easy. *Vozzet* = to convey, carry.

four wheels, built for one and a half, and licensed for two, with a *moojick* on the box driving like a London costermonger. But although the droshky is thus being gradually modernized, thanks to continual pressure from the police authorities, its driver, the *izvóstchik*, still remains a peasant from the country, utterly indifferent to all progress. More change has taken place in his droshky in the course of a few years than in the whole race of *izvóstchiks* for the past century or more. The political reforms which have bestirred other classes have left him unmoved, and he seems to be resigning himself to the prospect of being superseded by electric trams, taxi-cabs, and other self-propelling vehicles. At the worst, however, he will simply go back to his fields, for, like most other members of the working-classes in St. Petersburg, he keeps up his connection with the land, and probably sends a part of his earnings to his family in the village. As regards outward appearance, he continues to wrap himself from head to foot, over and above his other clothes, in the same kind of *armyak*,\* of dark blue cloth that was worn by his predecessors in the earliest years of the Russian capital, with a red

\* *Armyak* = very long, wide-skirted, and collarless peasant's overcoat.

or green band round the waist, and his legs and feet are so completely swathed in the ample folds of this strange garment that he is quite incapable of exercising any agility in case of danger. He is in a still more difficult position if his horse runs away while he is sitting with one or both of his legs in the well of his sledge, which takes the place of the droshky in winter. But this applies more to the private coachman, whose splendid high-mettled trotter is far more likely to bolt than the weakly, jaded horse of the public *izvóstchik*. And then, the coachman of a rich master, by reason of the traditional ideal, according to which he is generally selected and to which he endeavours to conform, is much too bulky to be capable of any great exertion on an emergency. This ideal requires that the perfect Russian coachman should be very stout and massive, with a fine full beard, and a very broad back to shelter the persons sitting behind him in the sledge from wind and snow. He is also swaddled in the *armyak*, and when wearing fur beneath it in winter his portly form assumes enormous proportions.

The only change in the original costume of both coachman and *izvóstchik* in modern times has been in their headgear, their present summer hat resem-





COACHMEN ON NEVSKY PROSPECT

*Izvóshchiks* soliciting fares on the Nevsky Prospect





bling that of the Yeomen of the Guard, or Beefeaters, minus the trimmings, and with the brims very much curled up at the sides. In the case of the ordinary *izvóstchik* this hat is generally somewhat battered, and, like the rest of his dress, rather dirty. The only wonder is that his whole turn-out is not in a worse state, considering the horribly squalid condition in which he lives. He is a careless and sometimes reckless driver, and occasionally slashes the passenger behind him across the face with the ends of his reins or the thong of his short whip, in throwing the one or the other back over his shoulder so as to take a better aim at his horse. He is also an inveterate bargainer, and feels offended if you refuse to go beyond the tax fixed by the police. The Emperor Paul once had all droshky drivers expelled from St. Petersburg on account of some important person having been run over. On the whole, however, the *izvóstchik*, with all his failings, is a good-humoured, unsophisticated Russian, and one who is exposed to more rigours of climate and weather, probably, than any other member of his calling in the world.

A still more curious factor of Russian life on the banks of the Neva has now to be described. You may stay in any of the half-dozen cosmopolitan

hotels of St. Petersburg, and hardly be aware that you are living in Russia, but if you lodge in a private house or hired apartment, the *dvornik* is pretty sure to remind you sooner or later of the country in which you are residing. You cannot get away from the *dvornik*, who is a type quite unique, not as a man, or a Russian, for he belongs to the same great peasant class as the *izvóstchik* and the carter, but he is altogether peculiar with regard to the strange combination of duties which he undertakes to perform.

Every house must have its *dvornik*, and every head *dvornik* has, at least, one or two assistants. As the word implies, the *dvornik*\* is keeper of the house-yard; in reality he looks after the entire house as well, and is, in fact, a sort of house policeman. There is no house without one or more of these court-yards, where the contents of cesspools (as long as there is no drainage) are periodically removed in carts, and logs of firewood are daily chopped up to be delivered to the occupants of the different flats. The *dvornik* attends to all this, and much more besides. He not only does the dirty work of the house, being paid therefor by a monthly wage exacted from each of the tenants, but he does the

\* *Dvor* = yard, court.

dirty work also of the police, who are his immediate and absolute masters. All passports of the inmates of the house must pass through his hands to the police, and he is constantly 'writing you in' and 'writing you out' at the police-station, and claiming various small gratuities for the trouble and annoyance that he gives. Early every morning he is bound to report personally to the chief police officer of his district, and woe betide him if he fails to disclose anything suspicious or unlawful about the behaviour or doings of the lodgers which subsequently turns out to be serious. Of course, a *dvornik*, we may suppose, can hardly be blamed if the head of the Russian detective force gets blown to pieces in a private lodging by a man whom he deliberately visits, knowing that his host is connected with the revolutionists, and with the purpose of trying to use him as a cat's-paw to catch other conspirators.

In addition to all this, the *dvornik* is an understudy of the policeman in the street. A Russian constable never takes anyone whom he arrests to the police-station if he can possibly help it; he always calls up a *dvornik* to do that unpleasant duty for him, so as not to be absent from his post. The *dvornik* and his assistants have also to take turns in standing or sitting at the gateway of the

yard and in front of the house day and night, especially at night, with brass badges and numbers on their breasts, and watching everybody who goes in and out. On all occasions of crowds in the streets the *dvorniks* have to render assistance to the police, and obey the latter's orders. They have, further, to keep the roadway clean in front of their domicile, and make themselves generally useful. The dens—for they can be called nothing else—in which they live in the yards are mostly half, or quite, underground. It is calculated that, with more than 30,000 houses in St. Petersburg, besides mills, factories, etc., there is an army of about 90,000 of these uncouth peasants, who, without any training whatever, virtually control the indoor organization of the Russian capital.

The *dvornik's* immediate superior, the *gorodovoi*,\* or policeman, deserves honourable mention on account of the great dangers which he braved during the extraordinary outbreak of 'expropriation,' indiscriminate murder, and hooliganism three years ago. Hundreds, if not thousands, of policemen all over Russia were then killed and injured, and those of St. Petersburg came in for their full share of suffering. One of the surviving effects of

\* From *gorod* = town.



THE FROZEN-MEAT MARKET





that period of jacquerie may still be seen when money is being conveyed from the State Bank or the Mint. A troop of cavalry with drawn swords and armed policemen on bicycles surround the waggons carrying the coins or notes, and no one is allowed to come within reach of the sabres of the escort, which are swung about in a menacing manner if any attempt is made to approach too near to the treasure thus being carted through the streets. And yet the St. Petersburg constable has not been more brutalized, as might be expected, by all that he has had to go through since 1904. On the contrary, he is much less rough, and far more attentive to the general public. He now hesitates to provoke retaliation by too much rudeness towards the lower orders, who are beginning to show signs of a nascent self-respect. It must be admitted in this connection that the police have been severely taught to be civil to the public by the present Gradonatchalnik.

With all this training into civil ways and habits, however, the *gorodovoi* still remains more a soldier than a policemen. His appearance is now more than ever that of a corporal or sergeant in full marching order, with sword, revolver, truncheon, whistle, and, in the case of the police at Tsarskoe

Selo, also with a telephone apparatus in a metal case slung over one shoulder for communicating with headquarters over the telephone-wires in the streets.

Some years ago an attempt was made to make the St. Petersburg policeman more like a civilian guardian of the peace by abolishing the obligation to give the military salute to passing officers, who appear on the streets at almost every step. So much of his attention was taken up by paying this respect to rank and uniform that his proper duties were liable to be neglected at the most critical moments. The inbred instinct was so powerful that, although an imminent danger to himself or some other person might be averted by promptness of action, the St. Petersburg policeman would nevertheless stand to attention and salute before attending to anything else, as soon as he caught sight of an officer. It is impossible to turn him into a servant of the public, especially as long as the latter entertain so little respect for the law and the system which he represents: that would be a complete perversion of the Russian idea of a policeman. His functions have been much narrowed down since the great development of the detective force and the secret police, combined with the gendarmes

—a small army in themselves, and a much-dreaded body of men—who are the executive police in political matters. At present the work of the ordinary police appears to consist entirely in worrying people about passports, regulating the street-traffic in the daytime, and ‘running in’ drunkards and dissolute females at night.

The St. Petersburg policeman has no beat, and you never see him prying into shop - windows looking after burglars, or trying door-locks at night. He keeps to the roadway as much as possible, as though he felt out of place on the pavement. He is posted at certain points, and only moves about to keep himself warm or from falling asleep. When the thermometer sinks ten degrees below freezing - point log-fires are lighted up in the streets by the ever - useful *dvorniks*, and around these cluster the policemen and *izvóstchiks* to keep themselves from being frozen to death.

## CHAPTER XI

### FURTHER CHARACTERISTICS

Summer flitting—Winter gaiety—Students—Mixture of races—  
British Colony—Antiquated survivals.

ST. PETERSBURG completely changes its appearance with the turn of the principal seasons of the year. During the short summer everybody who can, and many who cannot, afford it go to their country villas or estates, and the city is left chiefly to workmen, especially builders and repairers, and to merchants and others connected with shipping. For business people in any way interested in the import and export trades the period of open water and navigation is naturally the busiest time of the year, and this keeps the men in town, but their wives and families are sure all the same to go away like the rest. The exodus of women and children in the summer is so general as to be quite peculiar to St. Petersburg. Other great cities are theoretically 'empty' when society leaves for the country or abroad, but there is no perceptible falling off in the





THE OUTSIDE PORTER

The *dvornik*, or yard porter, asleep

crowds on all the main thoroughfares to indicate the fact. In St. Petersburg, on the contrary, the effects of the summer flitting at once become apparent in the streets, which are all but empty at hours of the day and evening when in winter they are always most crowded. If there be any large number of people on the street in the height of summer they constitute quite a different kind of public.

As soon as the last snows of winter disappear, and the increasing power of the sun begins to release the Neva from its bonds of ice, a feverish restlessness takes possession of families of all classes, quite like that observable in migratory birds at the change of seasons when confined in cages. All the talk is of the *datcha*, the country house, or of journeys farther afield. The people who most enjoy living in St. Petersburg in winter hate it most in summer. The unhealthy indoor life in winter, with hermetically puttied-up double windows, overheated rooms, and no ventilation worth speaking of—this makes them intolerant of residence there in summer. They long to get away from their winter wrappings and the stifling atmosphere of houses, and to be free to roam about in rural retirement without hats or coats.



And nowhere is the return of summer hailed with more delight than in St. Petersburg. It is even officially celebrated by the annual ceremony of opening the navigation of the Neva. As soon as the ice has moved away seaward the first vessel to be launched on the stream is always that of the Commandant of the fortress, who is rowed across the river in his state barge to the Palace under a salute from the guns on the ramparts.

The winter is the gay and festive season, when both the city and its inhabitants undergo a complete transformation in outward appearances, owing to the mantle of snow covering everything, the change from wheeled conveyances to sledges, and the wearing of fur coats and caps. The frozen canals support throngs of merry skaters, gliding over the ice to the strains of military music ; some twenty theatres and other places of entertainment are in full swing, headed by the finest Imperial opera and ballet representations in Europe, and night is turned into day. The streets are quite lively at three or four o'clock in the morning, for nowhere else are such late hours so generally indulged in. All goes on beautifully as long as it keeps cold and frosty. A thaw soon spoils everything. The conditions for making winter enjoyable, for instance, in London have to

be entirely reversed for a successful winter in St. Petersburg. Instead of a fall of snow interfering with traffic, it only facilitates it. The more snow the better for getting about in sledges, although a very heavy fall of it involves the authorities and private householders in considerable expense for removing it from roofs and yards. Here, again, the useful man-of-all-work, the *dvornik*, is brought into requisition, and it must be admitted that St. Petersburg knows how to deal with its snow. There is one exception, however, which is particularly noticeable when conditions of weather require the roadways to be cleared of caked snow and accumulated filth, and that is their dirty and sometimes almost impassable state in front of many Government buildings and barracks.

St. Petersburg is the educational and intellectual focus of the Russian Empire, and its large number of educational institutions regulate to a very great extent the movements and habits of a vast proportion of the population. When all these institutions close their doors at the beginning of summer, everybody leaves town; when they open again in September, everybody comes back to work and pleasure. Then the city perfectly swarms with students in uniform, including young men from all parts—

from Poland, the Caucasus, Siberia, and Central Asia. The students of the University alone number 10,000 or more. The variety of races amongst them, the want of European culture of many, in spite of much learning, their unkempt appearance, and the nightly dissipations of city life in which they very freely indulge, are prominent features of winter in the Russian capital.

As regards the different races, it may be said in general that the population of St. Petersburg exhibits no one common type. There is an extraordinary mixture of racial and physical characteristics, which point to the fact that no single one distinct type of race has yet been evolved out of the mass. One finds nothing strange in being told that a single person is descended within a few generations from Russian, Tartar, Swedish, Finnish, Lithuanian, and sometimes also even English, ancestors.

The British colony in St. Petersburg in its time has numbered many thousands, but since the Crimean War its strength has gradually waned, while the German colony has proportionately increased in wealth and numbers. There are now probably about 2,000 British subjects in St. Petersburg, engaged principally in business—mills,



THE PALACE QUAY OF THE NEVA  
Showing the river frontage of the Winter Palace



factories, farming, and teaching—and they support charitable institutions, libraries, a well-endowed church, and two Nonconformist chapels. There is also the New English Club, of which the British Ambassador, the Right Hon. Sir Arthur Nicolson, Bart., G.C.B., G.C.M.G., etc., is President, and Arthur W. W. Woodhouse, Esq., His Majesty's Consul, is a Vice-President. These able representatives of British interests, worthily seconded by their respective assistants, Councillor of Embassy H. J. O'Beirne, Esq., C.V.O., C.B., and Vice-Consul Cecil Mackie, Esq., take an active part in all that concerns the welfare of the British community, and are doing much to promote the development of British business in Russia.

As already pointed out, St. Petersburg has been losing some of its old characteristics. Nevertheless, there are still many strange survivals side by side with modern innovations. For example, at many places not far from the centre one may see streets which are not a bit better than those of the most out-of-the-way provincial towns, and in some of the outlying parts of the city the commonest kerosene lamps still light the streets at night. Only the principal thoroughfares are decently paved, hexangular blocks of wood being



chiefly used, whilst the other streets are covered with cobble-stones, which used to shake one up horribly when driving over them before the general use of rubber tyres. Fires, too, are still watched for from the tops of wooden towers, and signals are hoisted above them to show the position of a conflagration, although the latest electrical signalling posts have been introduced for communicating with the fire brigade. The firemen also drive with barrels of water to a fire, together with the latest kind of steam fire-engine. Again, alongside the modern public conveyances we have wretched primitive vehicles for passengers which ought to be all destroyed, except one specimen to be kept in the Imperial Carriage Museum as an historical curiosity. A similar contrast of old and new is presented in the matter of bridges. Two handsome bridges have been built across the Neva within the last twenty years, and a third is now under construction ; but an old wooden bridge of planks laid on anchored barges still stretches across the river right in front of the Winter Palace, and leads to such important points as the Exchange and the Customs House. This bridge, the planking of which has to be continually renewed, is often raised so high above the level of the banks



in stormy weather that no traffic can pass over it. A number of other wooden bridges unite the different islands of the city.

Another characteristic, which is gradually passing away, probably in proportion to the decrease in the illiterate portion of the population, now about 40 per cent., is the custom of painting pictures of articles sold in shops on their signboards outside. This kind of picture-writing, which was formerly so common on all shop-fronts, is disappearing from the more fashionable streets where articles on sale are now so much better displayed in the shop-windows.

Nothing has been said in this book on the Ermitage and other picture-galleries, museums, exhibitions, and academies, for which St. Petersburg is justly famous, as these have been so fully dealt with by other English writers in various handbooks and guides.

## CHAPTER XII

### ENVIRONS OF ST. PETERSBURG

Tsarskoe Selo—Pavlovsk—Krasnoe Selo—Peterhoff—Gatchino—  
Oranienbaum—Sestroretsk—The islands.

WHAT are usually called the environs of St. Petersburg are, properly speaking, not environs at all. The term is inaccurately applied to a very large area of country, and made to include many villa-settlements, summer resorts, villages, and even separate towns, such as Tsarskoe Selo and Peterhoff, situated at considerable distances away from the capital. More or less historical interest attaches to many of these places in connection with St. Petersburg, but at the present day only the two towns just mentioned are of any real importance.

Tsarskoe Selo, where the Emperor and Empress have resided in winter since the beginning of the revolutionary movement in 1905, is a town of some 25,000 inhabitants, fifteen miles off from St. Petersburg. The railway running to it in a southern direction was the first line of rails laid down in the



STUDENTS



Russian Empire, the next having been the line to Moscow. It was the work of English engineers, and the Emperor Nicholas I. made his first journey over it in 1837, sitting with the Empress in an open carriage, which was placed on an ordinary platform truck. Parallel with this line there is now a second railway to Tsarskoe Selo, which is reserved exclusively for the Imperial Family and Court.

The town stands on elevated ground as compared with St. Petersburg, and is regarded as a very healthy spot relatively to the latter city. It was begun on the site of an old Finnish village called *Saari Muis*, or Elevated Farm, the word *Saar* having been gradually Russianized into *Saarski*, and then into Tsarskoe Selo, without any original intention, it seems, of calling it the Tsar's Village, as at present. The village was presented to Catherine I. by Peter the Great in 1708, and that Empress had a palace built there, and adopted it as a summer residence. It is celebrated in medical annals as the only locality in the district of the Russian capital that has never been attacked by cholera. Every year there is a religious procession through its streets to commemorate the immunity of Tsarskoe Selo during the terrible outbreak of the epidemic in the middle of the last

century. It has the further advantages of being supplied with good and pure water, and a drainage-system, which makes it the healthiest settlement, probably, in all the province of St. Petersburg.

The town itself is in no way remarkable, being laid out in wide streets and boulevards, with a number of fine summer mansions of the nobility and gentry, and of persons attached to the Imperial Court. The interest and importance of the place centres entirely in its Imperial palaces and the large parks, with lakes and gardens, which surround them. For the most part these parks are more like woods, owing to the large number of old trees which cast a gloom over most of the avenues and pathways. The Empresses Elizabeth and Catherine II. erected here many handsome and fantastic buildings, enriched the palaces with valuable treasures, and ornamented the parks with monuments, Chinese pagodas, artificial ruins, and statuary. There are two principal palaces, in one of which the Emperor and Empress reside, while the other is now used only for State receptions and ceremonies. This latter, the old palace, is celebrated for the splendour of its apartments. The walls of one of its rooms are faced entirely with amber in various designs, and the walls of another

are covered with incrustations of lapis-lazuli. The latter room also has ebony flooring beautifully inlaid with mother-of-pearl.

About three miles from Tsarskoe Selo there is a smaller town of about 5,000 inhabitants, called Pavlovsk, which, like all these adjuncts of St. Petersburg, owes its origin to the Imperial Family. The locality was given as a present to the Emperor Paul, while he was yet heir-apparent, by Catherine II. Here are more beautiful palaces, with fine wooded parks and lakes, but the place is best known and appreciated for its excellent orchestra of music, which performs here in the summer evenings, and attracts thousands of visitors from St. Petersburg to the concert-house attached to the railway-station.

Some eight miles west from Tsarskoe Selo, and about half-way between the latter place and Peterhoff, is Krasnoe Selo, the location of the great summer camp of the garrison of St. Petersburg.

Peterhoff, which in summer shares the honour of being one of the two residential towns of the present Sovereign, is situated on the shore of the Finnish Gulf, opposite to the island of Cronstadt. It owes its existence to the Empress Catherine I., who suggested to her husband, Peter the Great, the advisability of his having some near retreat in



which to take rest and shelter in stormy weather while engaged in superintending the construction of the fortifications of Cronstadt Harbour. His first building here was the small pavilion on the shore, which he called 'Monplaisir.' He afterwards constructed a magnificent palace and grounds on the plan of the French Versailles. The glory of Peterhoff scenery is the fountains, which constitute an entire avenue of spouting jets from the palace to the sea. At the head of them all, in front of the terrace leading up to the palace, is the principal fountain, a gilded figure of Samson forcing open the jaws of a lion, whence a column of water rises 70 feet into the air.

Another Imperial seat is Gatchino, now the summer retreat of the Empress Dowager, twenty-seven miles from St. Petersburg, with some 15,000 summer residents, and a palace containing 600 rooms. Then comes Ropsha, where Peter III. met with his mysterious death, Oranienbaum, Strelna, and other smaller places, all creations of Peter the Great or his Imperial successors. All these towns and settlements are situated on the south side of the River Neva. On the north, or Finnish side, there are a few summer settlements of the inhabitants of the capital, such as Ozerki,



PETERHOFF

The fountains in front of the palace at Peterhof



Shouvalovo, Pargolo, and Sestroretsk, the latter having been also a creation of Peter the Great.

Only the islands of the Neva remain to be mentioned as part of the more immediate suburbs of St. Petersburg. On these, which are joined by several wooden bridges across different branches of the river, the inhabitants who are obliged to stay in town during the summer take the fresh air. It is often remarked in hot sultry weather that without these islands St. Petersburg would be quite uninhabitable. They are well provided with restaurants, public gardens, theatres, and café chantants, and a fashionable pleasure in spring is to drive to a place on one of them called the 'Point,' to admire the glowing splendour of the setting sun.

When Professor Oscar Browning, of Cambridge, was in St. Petersburg in 1909, entertaining Russian society with his lectures on English literature, he addressed to one of the Russian journals the following sonnet, which may be fitly reproduced here in concluding this volume :

#### ST. PETERSBURG.

Fair child, engendered by a despot's thought,  
Queen of the North, enthroned on confluent streams,  
Goal of his strivings, pagod of his dreams,  
From churlish nature by persistence wrought.

Prove worthy of thy mission, slowly taught  
By triumph and disaster, wear thy crown;  
Clutch not at hasty issues, be thine own,  
Too oft by misdirected good distraught.

Then the bright spirit of the Slavic mind,  
Condemned too long to an unworthy part,  
Led by thy gentle governance, shall find  
New worlds in letters, music, life, and art.  
Awake, proud city of the golded domes!  
Thy winter past, the joy of harvest comes.

# M O S C O W

## CHAPTER XIII

### HISTORICAL

‘COME to me, brother, to Moscow.’ Little did old Prince Urie Dolgorouky think, when he wrote this invitation to his friend Prince Sviatoslav Olgovitch, in 1147, that he was writing an historical document. However, it has become so, for this is the earliest authentic document which mentions Moscow.

Before then the place where Moscow now stands was called Kuchkova, after the Kuchki family, who owned the land. However, old Prince Dolgorouky acquired the land, built a strong wooden wall round the little village, lodged in it a small garrison, and renamed it Moskva, or ‘the place by the bridge.’ However, his little fort was completely destroyed by fire a few years after.

In 1272 Prince Daniel Nevsky settled at Moscow, which from that year became a separate principedom.

Thanks to its central position, and to the wily policy of its Princes, the population of the town rapidly increased, as also the wealth of its Princes. For their own safety the old Princes fortified with strong wooden walls the little triangle of high ground contained on one side—the south—by the Moscow River, and on the west and north by a small river, with marshy banks—the Neglinia. This was the Kremlin, the fortress. Moscow became so important that the Metropolitan forsook Vladimir, the old Church capital, and moved to Moscow, where the first stone building in the town, the Cathedral of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, was built in 1339, under the superintendence of foreign architects, as the Russians only understood wooden buildings. In 1367 the whole of Moscow, including the wooden walls of the Kremlin, was burnt down. Prince Dmitry Donskoi then had a stone wall built round the Kremlin. This was badly constructed, and was replaced, early in the fifteenth century, by the walls now standing, which were constructed under the direction of Italian architects.

Owing to its central, and consequently protected, position, Moscow suffered less than any of the other princedoms in Russia from the invasions of the





THE SAVIOUR (SPASSKY) TOWER OF THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW



Tartars, Swedes, Poles, etc. ; consequently people flocked to it for shelter, the population rapidly increased, and the coffers of the Moscow Princes became well filled.

When the Tartars put up the post of Grand Prince (or Grand Duke, as we say now) for auction, the Moscow Princes easily outbid the others, and thereby still more increased their wealth and influence. Ultimately the Princes of Moscow became looked on as hereditary Grand Dukes of Russia. This brings us to the end of the fifteenth century, when the Tartar yoke was nearly broken. Moscow is now vastly improved ; Byzantine architects are building stone palaces for the wealthy nobles, and the Grand Dukes of Moscow now style themselves ‘ Monarchs of all Russ.’

Ivan III. (1462-1505) married Sophia Palæologus, niece of the last Emperor of Byzantium, and on the fall of Constantinople considered himself the heir of the Byzantine Emperors, and adopted the double-headed eagle as his arms. Hundreds of Greeks and Italians came to Moscow with Sophia Palæologus and on the fall of Byzantium, and brought Greek art with them. In 1547 Ivan IV. was crowned in Moscow with a royal diadem, and assumed the title of Tsar, which for so long had

been the attribute of the Tartar Khans. Ivan earned the name of 'the Terrible' by his extraordinary cruelties. However, he was an unscrupulous, sagacious, powerful, and politic ruler, and did as much to raise the fortunes of his country as Oliver Cromwell did for England. During his reign the Cossack Yermak conquered Siberia, and it was added to Ivan's dominions.

The growing influence of this the first 'Tsar of Muscovy' is shown by the fact that England opened up commercial undertakings with Moscow, and sent out expeditions under Richard Chancellor in 1553, and Sir Hugh Willoughby. Ivan was so impressed by their accounts of the greatness of England that, having just got rid of his seventh wife, he sent over an Ambassador to England with a letter to his 'good friend' Queen Elizabeth, requesting her to send him out a bride from her family. Queen Elizabeth suggested Lady Mary Hastings, daughter of the second Earl of Huntingdon, who was of royal blood. The Russian Ambassador, Pizemsky, returned to Russia with glowing accounts of the bride, and also with the Order of the Garter (this is still preserved in the treasury in Moscow) for Ivan, who was so pleased that he gave the English the monopoly of

Russian trade. However, Ivan died suddenly, in 1584, before the negotiations were completed, and Lady Mary Hastings escaped being Ivan's eighth bride.

Horsey writes: 'Ivan Vasiliwich was full of readie wisdom, cruel, bloudye, merciless: he was sumptuously intomed in Michell Archangel church, where he remains a fearfull spectacle to the memory of such as pass by or heer his name spoken of, who are contented to cross and bless themselves from his resurrection againe.'

## CHAPTER XIV

### HISTORICAL (*continued*)

THAT Moscow had enormously increased in size and population is clear by the fact that towards the end of the sixteenth century there were 9,000 foreigners living in the 'foreign quarter.'

In 1343 we read that twenty-eight churches perished in a great fire, and in 1366, when the Tartar General Tokhtamish captured the town, over 24,000 persons were killed in it. Under the walls of the Kremlin there sprang up a thriving little business town. In 1534 a wooden wall was built round it, which was replaced two years later by the brick and stone wall, about two miles in length, which is still standing. This now represents 'the city.' According to an old census, in 1520 there were already 41,500 houses in Moscow.

The town still went on rapidly increasing outside the Kremlin and the 'Kitai-gorod,' or city, and a stone wall was built round this, the so-called 'White Town,' in the days of Feodor, son of Ivan the



THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW





'Terrible and Boris Godunoff, who succeeded him. This wall was about five and a half miles long. The town went on increasing in size, and now building commenced also on the opposite side of the river. In 1633, owing to fear of invasion by the Tartars from the Crimea, a ditch and fence were constructed round it. In 1637-1640 inside the ditch was thrown up a great embankment of earth, faced with beams, with a strong palisade on top. Owing to this earthen rampart, this part of the town became known as the 'Earthen Town.' The shape of Moscow within this rampart was a rough circle, the circumference of which was nearly twelve and a half miles. The city has increased enormously in size since then, but no further fortifications were ever erected.

In 1689 Peter the Great ascended the throne, and in 1703 he commenced to build St. Petersburg, which he created the new capital, he himself taking the title of Emperor.

Elizabeth, Peter the Great's daughter, reigned from 1741 to 1762. She caused the rampart round the 'Earthen Town' to be removed, and the moat round it to be filled in. The ground that had been thus occupied she converted into a long series of boulevards. She then had the wall round the

· White 'Town' removed, and with the bricks built the huge Foundlings' Home on the banks of the river, and another line of boulevards occupied its site. In 1755 she also founded the Moscow University, the first in all Russia.

In 1812 we have the French invasion, and Napoleon's short occupation of Moscow, in the reign of Alexander I. Most of old wooden Moscow then perished by fire, and when the city was rebuilt the generality of the houses were brick. At the present time no wooden buildings are allowed to be constructed in the town.

In this short sketch we have brought Moscow from the small wooden fort put up by old Prince Dolgorouky in 1147 to the present city, with its population of 1,400,000, which is rapidly increasing, and now has an area the same in extent as Paris.





THE WEDDING OF A NOBLEMAN

## CHAPTER XV

### IMPRESSIONS OF MOSCOW

A FOREIGN traveller in Russia—I think it was the German Legate Herberstein—wrote, *circa* 1460: ‘If Moscow is not in Asia, it certainly is on the very edge of Europe, and very close to Asia.’

Though, naturally, the town has greatly changed in all respects since that was written, still, I think all paying their first visit to Moscow, and especially those who have been in the East, cannot help feeling how much of Asia there still remains. For instance, the types you meet in the streets. I do not allude to the Tartars or Armenians, who are Asiatics pure and simple, but the peasants. To see those big, burly fellows, with their sunburnt faces and fur caps and sheep-skin coats, you are irresistibly reminded of the Pathan or Afridi you meet in the bazaars in Peshawur or Northern India in their poshteens. You notice such common traits. The Russian peasants do not walk alongside one another and talk, as ordinary Europeans:

they walk one behind the other and talk over their shoulders to the man behind, just as the natives in India do. In the bazaars in India the whole talk is 'pici' and 'rupees'; so here all the talk is 'copeks' and 'roubles.' Then, again, just as in India nothing in the way of buying or selling can be effected without shouting, gesticulating, chaffering, so here, if a peasant goes to buy anything for himself or his wife, he is seized by the employés of the various shops, whose business is to stand about by the shop-doors and secure anybody who looks like a customer, nearly torn into pieces by the representatives of the various firms, and finally dragged into a shop, where the methods of bargaining, etc., are purely Oriental. The shopman begins by asking twice as much as he is really prepared to take, and the customer offers one-half of what he is really prepared to pay. After hours of heated bargaining, each party declaring he is being ruined, a deal is ultimately effected by compromise. The noise and excitement accompanying these transactions are absolutely Oriental, and so also are the smells one meets in the by-streets and courts where the shops with goods for the peasants are situated.

The Moscow merchant classes are proverbially



conservative. It is not long since that the beauty of a lady and her chances of making a good marriage were calculated very largely, if not mainly, by her weight and stoutness. No rich man would marry a thin girl; it would be a reproach to him and a bad advertisement for his business.

The long Tartar rule in Russia left deep impressions, and one of the deepest was on the way the Russian women were treated. Till the times of the Tartars they were quite free, but after that they seem to have been mainly confined to the *terem*, or women's apartment. In the old portion of the palace you see the *terem*, and above it is a small gallery with little windows of talc. Tradition says that the old Grand Dukes or Tsars and their courtiers used to look on the ladies walking there, to aid them in selecting a bride, as they apparently did not see them otherwise.

When Peter the Great came to the throne and established his capital in Petersburg, one of the greatest fights he had was to induce the nobles to allow their wives and daughters to come to Court, and when he ultimately got their consent, it was no easy matter to induce the ladies themselves to come. Even now the ladies' part of the house

is usually upstairs, away at the back of the house.

Until quite a few years since it was considered impossible for a lady to walk in the streets. If she went out she must drive, and must have with her a male or female servant. If by any chance a lady had to walk in the streets, she put on her oldest and shabbiest attire; hence, if you met a smartly-dressed person you were pretty safe in thinking it was an actress or a *demi-mondaine*. However, the last few years have worked wonders, and now the fashionable streets are full of smartly-dressed ladies promenading up and down, with the usual retinue of well-dressed men, for the Russians are very gregarious and hate being alone anywhere. Their idea of enjoyment is a crowd. If you go for a walk you must form a party, and must all walk and talk together, or you are voted unsociable, if not rude.

In another respect Moscow is quite Oriental, and that is in its hospitality. In this respect it is quite different from Petersburg. In Zabiélin's 'History of Moscow' he alludes to this, and, with a note of pride, says that the very first mention of Moscow was old Prince Dolgorouky's invitation to his neighbouring Prince to come to Moscow, where he



A RICH MERCHANT AND HIS WIFE



had prepared 'a strong feast,' in 1147. 'This traditional hospitality continues now. I still remember my first experience of this. Just after I came to Russia, in the family in which I was staying, one of the ladies had an *imenina*, or 'names-day'—*i.e.*, it was the calendar day of the saint after whom she was named, and in Moscow, at all events, the 'names-day' is looked on as far more important than the birthday. The guests arrived about 12 noon, and shortly after we sat down to dinner. This lasted about four hours, and then immediately tea was brought for the ladies and cognac and cigarettes for the men. Relays of fresh tea kept on arriving, with fruit and sweets, till about 10 p.m., when supper was laid, and we ultimately rose from supper at about 4 a.m. That was certainly for a 'names-day'; but if you have an introduction to a Russian house, you will be asked to call any evening. When you arrive you will be entertained with fruit, tea, sweets, and cigarettes galore. After staying an hour or so you rise to leave, but your host will not hear of it—you must stay to supper. Supper may last any time, but you need not expect to get away before 2 to 3 a.m. If you insist on leaving earlier your hosts will be very disappointed and somewhat

hurt, as is also the case if you do not eat heartily of all the numerous and excellent dishes they press on you.

The old Russian proverb says, 'The mouth is rejoiced with a large piece,' and your host in helping you acts up to the spirit of the proverb.

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE KREMLIN

ALTHOUGH Moscow is such an ancient city, there are now very few remains of its old buildings. Beyond the Kremlin walls and buildings, and a certain number of churches, there is virtually nothing in the whole city that is 200 years old. This may be accounted for by the fact that the Russians always preferred wooden buildings to stone ones, and by the numerous terrible fires which devastated the city time after time. However, even if there were nothing ancient in Moscow besides the Kremlin, that would make up for all other deficiencies.

I have shown over the Kremlin numerous people who have travelled all over Europe, if not over the world, and they unite in saying that it is unique. To compare it with England, it represents Westminster Abbey, St. Paul's, the Tower of London, and the contents of the Tower of London rolled into one. It is the keystone of Russian history,



and the men who lived in it were those who, out of a collection of petty and weak principedoms, created the mighty Russian Empire.

The Kremlin is well situated on the highest ground in Moscow. To the south, the walls in old days were washed by the river, which is now confined by an embankment, leaving space for traffic. To the east and west were deep moats, filled by the stream, the Neglinia—which now runs underground in pipes to the west of the Kremlin. The moat on the eastern side has been entirely filled in, and that on the west partially so, the hollow remaining having been converted into a garden.

If you enter the Kremlin by the northern or Nicholas gates, to your right is the Arsenal, built by Peter I. in 1702-1736. It was blown up by the French in 1812, but was rebuilt by Nicholas I. To the left are the Law Courts, a handsome triangular block, built in the days of Catherine II.—about 1780. Immediately facing you, in front of the gates, is a small ornamental cross, of ancient Russian design, erected to commemorate the spot where the Grand Duke Serge, then Governor-General of Moscow, was assassinated by a bomb.

All along the walls of the Arsenal are arranged



THE SMALL GOLDEN PALATA, OR TSARITSA'S HALL, IN THE KREMLIN. (Page 26)



hundreds of field-guns and mortars, captured from the French in their retreat from Moscow.

In the background are the barracks of the Grenadiers. Behind the barracks are the three ancient cathedrals—that of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin, built in the fourteenth century; the Cathedral of the Annunciation, built at the commencement of the fifteenth century; and that of Michael the Archangel, built early in the fourteenth century. The old Assumption Cathedral was badly built, and the present building was reconstructed under the guidance of Italian architects, being consecrated in 1479. The cathedral has seen troublous days, and was looted and partly destroyed by the Tartars, Poles, and French, only the old walls still remaining of the original building. The old wall-paintings, of the seventeenth century, are very quaint. Some of the icons are very ancient. Among the relics are one of the nails with which our Lord was fastened to the cross, a fragment of our Lord's robe, and a fragment of the Virgin's robe. The coronations of the Russian monarchs have for centuries always taken place in this cathedral, and most of the official services are also held here.

The original Cathedral of the Annunciation was

founded in 1397, but, owing to faulty building, had to be virtually reconstructed in 1489. The wall-paintings in the interior are most interesting, especially the history of Jonah. The cathedral is connected with the palace by a covered passage, by which the old Kings and Queens entered the building. In ancient times the Grand Dukes and Kings were always christened and generally married here. When Ivan the Terrible was excommunicated, and therefore unable to enter a church, he had a small chapel built on to the cathedral, with a special entrance. A window was made in the wall of the cathedral, through which he could look, and thus take some part in the services. He also collected and deposited in his chapel various highly venerated relics. This still exists, and a niche in the wall is pointed out as his seat.

The Archangel Cathedral was built, in 1333, of wood, but had to be pulled down in 1505, a new stone edifice being started at once, under the superintendence of a Milan architect, which was consecrated in 1509. However, it has had to be renewed several times since, the last time being in 1813, as it was very greatly damaged by the French. This cathedral is the burying-place of the Russian Grand-Dukes and Tsars up to the days of Peter

the Great. Here, in a separate chapel, is buried Ivan the Terrible, alongside his son, whom he killed in a fit of rage with his own hands. Here, also, are the tomb and various relics of the heir-apparent, Dmitry, who was murdered, and of Prince Michael of Chernigoff, who was tortured to death by the Tartars. In the robe-room of the cathedral are a very fine old New Testament of the twelfth century and the cross that Ivan the Terrible always wore.

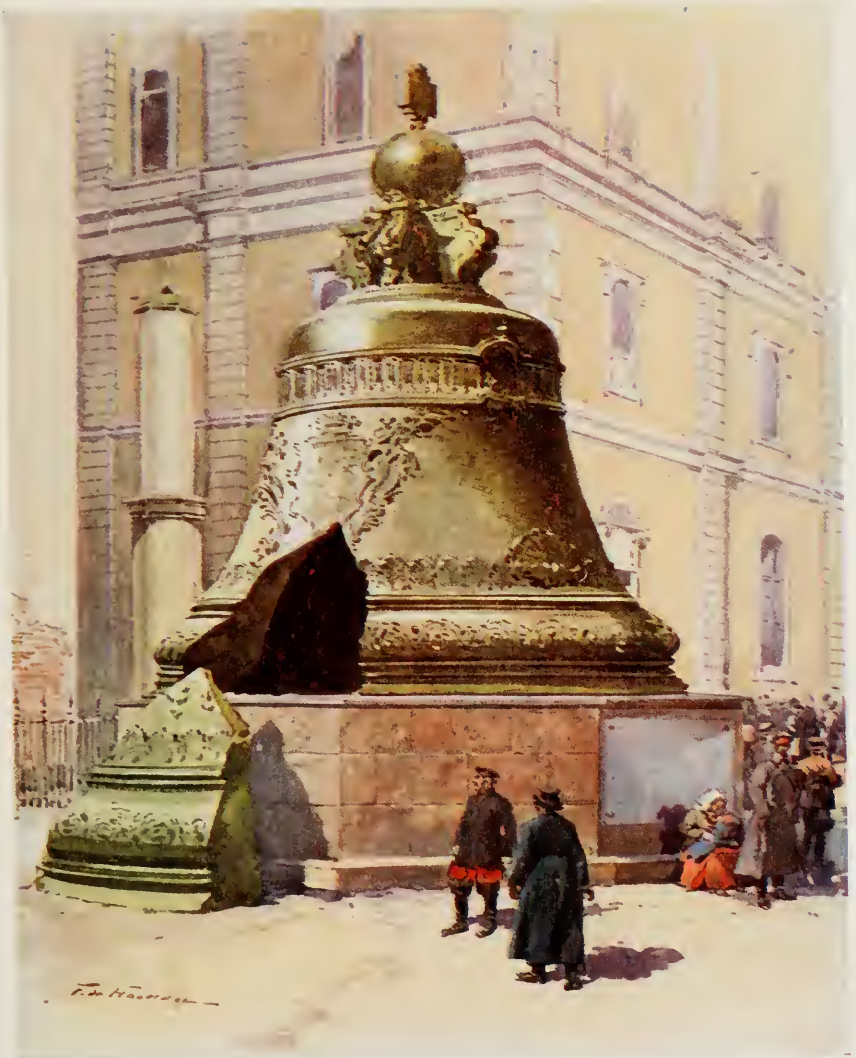
Alongside the Archangel Cathedral is the lofty belfry constructed by Boris Godunoff, who became Tsar of Russia on the death of his semi-imbecile brother-in-law Feodor in 1598. With Feodor the old line of Rurik became extinct, as Boris Godunoff had arranged that Feodor's only son, Dmitry, should be murdered in 1591. The people, though there was no direct proof of it, were all convinced that Godunoff had murdered the heir-apparent, Dmitry, and every national disaster which afterwards happened was attributed either to Godunoff's machinations or to the anger of God at such a sinful man becoming Tsar. He was, in the popular opinion, responsible for the terrible famine of 1601, and with a view to providing work for the people, he caused the great belfry of Ivan the Great to be built. It is interesting as the first known instance of famine-



relief work in Russia. Needless to say, Boris Godunoff died a violent death, in 1605: he would seem to have been poisoned, though this has never been actually proved.

The belfry is a massive building, 327 feet high. When Napoleon was in Moscow, in 1812, he heard that the cross at the top of the belfry was of solid gold, so he had it taken down. However, it proved to be of iron, so Napoleon shot the false informers. The belfry was greatly damaged by the French, who tried to blow it up. The great bell weighs 66 tons, and is only rung on great occasions, such as New Year, Christmas, or Easter. The next largest bell weighs 33 tons. At the foot of the belfry, on a granite basement, stands the 'Tsar-Bell,' badly cracked, and with a massive piece broken out of it. When it was cast, in the days of Boris Godunoff, it weighed very nearly 135 tons. It was recast in the middle of the seventeenth century, and, after great efforts, was raised to its place in the arch of the belfry—about half way up. However, two years after a fire destroyed its supports, and it fell and was broken. It lay in the ground where it was about 100 years, and then, by orders of the Empress Anna, it was recast on the spot in 1735. The scaffolding for re-raising it to





THE "TSAR" BELL



its place was just ready when, in 1737, by some mischance, the scaffolding was set on fire. The large amount of cold water used to put out the fire, which fell on the bell, which was nearly red-hot, caused it to crack so badly that a large piece fell out. After that the bell again lay in the ground nearly 100 years, till, in 1836, the Emperor Nicholas I. had it raised and placed on the granite pedestal where it now stands. The bell, after its recastings, was much larger than its original size, as various alloys were added. Its present weight is just on 200 tons; it is 19 feet high and 60 feet in circumference. The clapper is over 18 feet long.

Close by the great bell is another massive monument of Russian casting. This is the 'Tsar-Gun.' It was cast in Moscow in 1586 by a Russian smith, and weighs 40 tons, is close on 20 feet in length, and the diameter of the bore is almost exactly a yard. Needless to say, no shot has ever been fired from it.

At the back of the cathedrals, facing the river, is the main Kremlin Palace, built in the shape of an irregular hollow square, with a large courtyard in the centre. In the courtyard stands the oldest church in Moscow—St. Saviour's in the Wood,

so called because when it was built, early in the thirteenth century, all the ground now occupied by the Kremlin was a virgin forest. The present building was finished in 1527. In ancient days it was the chapel of the Grand Dukes and Duchesses, and till the Archangel Cathedral was built was also their burying-place. The old church saw many a strange sight, and in it was shaved the head of many a Princess whom, for political reasons, it was considered advisable to cut off from the world—alias, to lodge in a nunnery. Not a few Princes also were here, voluntarily or against their own will, shorn preparatory to entering a monastery.

The spot now occupied by the palace has from the earliest times been the site of the residence of the Grand Dukes and Tsars of Muscovy, or Russia. In ancient times the building was called the Prince's Court, and when the Grand Dukes of Moscow became Tsars, the name was changed to the King's Court. Till the days of Ivan III.—the latter end of the fifteenth century—the palace was a wooden building; however, he summoned Italian architects, who finished building him a stone palace in 1508. Owing to the building being constructed by Italian architects and to the influence of Sophia Palæologus, Ivan's wife, the building, both exter-



THE "TSAR" GUN, MOSCOW



nally and internally, bore a distinctly Byzantine appearance. Nearly every successive monarch built on a certain amount, but these additions were in a strictly Russian style of architecture. The only exception was the 'false Dmitry,' whose tastes were entirely Polish. When the Poles overran Russia, the old King's Court fell into almost complete ruin, and was entirely looted of all its treasures. The first of the Romanoffs, Michael (1613-1645), had to entirely restore the palace, and his successor Alexis also did a great deal. Under their guidance the palace was placed in an excellent state, and was magnificently adorned and fitted up.

Peter the Great virtually left Moscow, and resided at his estate of Preobrajensky, before he moved to Petersburg and allowed the palace to fall into a sad state of decay, and it was only for his marriage with Catherine that Peter had the buildings repaired at all. However, nearly the whole palace was burnt down in 1737. The palace was rebuilt by the Empress Elizabeth. However, the great fire of Moscow, when Napoleon was obliged to abandon the city, in 1812, again destroyed virtually the whole building. The present palace was built in the days of Nicholas I., and was consecrated in 1849. The main block of the palace, the state



apartments, faces south, the windows looking over the river. To the east of the building joins on the old Granovitia Palata, and at the back of the building, on the other side of the palace courtyard, is what is left of the old palace.

The exterior of the palace is very simple, and the block is only two stories high. In the palace are 9 churches or chapels, 7 courts, and 700 rooms, which can contain 20,000 persons.

As you enter the palace, to the left are the Imperial apartments, to the right a staircase, which joins the palace with the Cathedral of the Annunciation, and facing you the main staircase. As you turn to the right at the top of the staircase, you enter the St. George's Hall, about 80 by 25 yards. The walls are draped with the colours of the ribbon of the Order of St. George, the principal Russian military Order, corresponding (in some of the grades) to our V.C., and on marble slabs let into the walls are engraved all the names of the knights of the Order. The Order of St. George was founded by the Empress Catherine II. in 1769.

From the St. George's Hall you pass into the Alexander Hall—*i.e.*, of the Order of St. Alexander Nevsky, which was founded in 1735. The furniture and drapery of the walls are of the colour of





A SCENE IN THE KREMLIN DURING THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR

the ribbon of the Order, deep crimson. On the walls are pictures by Professor Maller illustrating incidents in the life of St. Alexander Nevsky.

Passing on, you come into the St. Andrew's Hall, the walls of which are draped with pale blue, the colour of the ribbon of the Order, which was founded in 1698 by Peter I. At the far end of the room, on a slight elevation, are three thrones, used at the time of the recent coronation by the Emperor and the two Empresses. There is a splendid view from the windows of this and the Alexander Hall across the river.

Beyond the St. Andrew's Hall is the Chevalier-Garde Room, where the guard of honour is stationed on the occasions of state reception. The walls are of white marble. From the Chevalier-Garde Room you enter the Catherine Hall. The Order of St. Catherine the Martyr was founded in 1814.

This is the Empress's throne-room. The walls are draped in white silk, embroidered with the initials of the Order (L. S. F. R.). The throne is on a slightly raised dais, and the canopy is of crimson velvet. The pillars of malachite are very fine and costly, as also the crystal candelabra. Joining the Empress's throne-room is the state drawing-room, in the Renaissance style, the walls draped with

cloth of gold on a green background. The Chinese and Japanese candelabra are very handsome, as also the inlaid buhl tables.

Off the drawing-room are the state bedroom and dressing-rooms. The latter are interesting, as they were made to show the skill of the Russian carpenters, and take to pieces, there being virtually no nails employed in their construction, but each portion fitting accurately into its position. Beyond the dressing-rooms comes the Winter Garden, in which is a beautiful collection of tropical palms and plants.

From the Winter Garden you pass into the heir-apparent's apartments. The drawing-room is called the Silver Room, as most of the objects—chairs, tables, picture-frames, etc.—are of pure silver. On the walls are four very fine tapestries, illustrating the adventures of Don Quixote. Some of the furniture in the study and bedroom is also interesting and of beautiful workmanship.

Passing on, one enters the old part of the palace, and passing the corridor, off which are the rooms of the maids of honour, you reach the small Golden Palata, or hall. This was built by Feodor, son of Ivan the Terrible, for his bride Irene, sister of the celebrated Boris Godunoff. At one time this was

the Patriarch's audience-chamber, but became that of the Grand Duchesses and Tsaritsas. The walls are decorated with frescoes, illustrating well-known epochs in the history of Christianity.

From the small Golden Palata, or Tsaritsa's Hall, you pass into the Vladimir Hall, built in honour of the Order of St. Vladimir, the walls being of pink marble, and the emblems of the Order on the ceiling. The anterooms of the hall lead to Red (or Beautiful) Staircase and to the celebrated Granovitia Hall. The walls are covered with frescoes illustrating Biblical or historical scenes.

The existing Beautiful Staircase was built after the great fire of 1737. Before then the old staircase had a gilded roof over it, whereas now it is open. It leads from the Granovitia Palata to the Cathedral of the Annunciation in three flights. The old staircase is connected with many an historical scene. From the staircase in old times the Tsars distributed alms to the beggars on their way back from Divine service; here they received the Patriarchs and chief boyars, or nobles. Here took place many an historical murder in the troublous times of past history, and along this staircase have passed all the Russian monarchs since the days of Ivan III. on their way to the Cathedral of the



Assumption for their coronation. Now the staircase is used only for state entrances to the Cathedral of the Assumption, and from it the Emperor bows to the people assembled on the square beneath. The Granovitia Palata was built by Ivan III. in 1487-1491. It was intended for state functions, such as the reception of foreign Ambassadors, etc.

Feodor, son of Ivan the Terrible, had the walls decorated with frescoes, in the quaint old Byzantine church-painting style. Among them are representations of the creation of the world and of the human race; the acts of David and Solomon, the story of Joseph, and a series of portraits of the Russian monarchs from the days of Rurik. However, the hall fell into a bad state of repair, and was done up again in 1882 by order of Alexander II.

In the middle of the hall is a large square pillar, which supports the arches of the roof. When a state function is to be held, or a procession is to pass through the hall, the shelves on this pillar are decorated with silver vessels of all sorts. These are gifts made by foreign monarchs to the Russian Tsars and Emperors. At other times these magnificent vessels are lodged in the Treasury. The old English vessels are really superb, and I have been assured by connoisseurs who know our English





THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR



collections that we have nothing to be compared to the display in this the old capital of Russia.

In the hall is a throne, and round the walls are oak benches, carved in the antique Russian style. The carpet is a very strange one, and has been embroidered in old Russian designs by the nuns of the nunnery of St. John.

High up in the wall is a semicircular window. This looks into the hall from the women's rooms. According to old Russian custom (which had been deeply affected by contact with the Tartars) women could not be present openly at men's carouses, debates, etc. As the ladies were curious, the window was constructed to enable them to see and hear, while they themselves remained invisible and apart. This historical chamber is now only used at the time of the coronation. In it the Emperor receives the congratulations of his relations and of the representatives of foreign Powers, and here he then dines in state, waited on by his nobles.

Going back along the anterooms and across the Vladimir Hall, one comes to the staircase leading up to the old *Terem*, or private portion of the palace, which is shut off from the main palace by a gilt barrier. At the foot of the staircase is a small church, which, as it is also fenced off by a gilt

barrier, is known as 'the Church of our Saviour behind the Gilt Barrier.' This was the palace church, and is over the Tsaritsa's Palata. It was built by the Tsar Michael in 1635, but has been redecorated several times since then, the last occasion being in the time of Nicholas I. Fortunately, the renovations have all been carefully carried out, in the old style, to harmonize with the rest of the church. In the church are some ancient icons of the fifteenth-century style, brought from Byzantium, according to tradition, by Sophia Palæologus.

The old Terem Palace is a five-storied building, and is a perfect example of an old Russian princely wooden building. The old palace was built by the Tsar Michael early in the seventeenth century. The first room is the dining-room, the walls and ceiling of which—all in small arches—are painted all over, as also are the quaint ancient stoves. In the windows—diamond panes—instead of glass, is talc, and the floor is very curious. Then follows the Council Chamber, also decorated with wall-paintings. Beyond this is the Throne-Room, with its ancient furniture, and the old chair used by Tsar Michael. The walls are painted red, picked out lavishly with gold. On the arches of the roof are paintings of our Lord, and representations of



HERALDS ANNOUNCING THE CORONATION OF THE EMPEROR





the coats of arms of the principedoms and districts of Russia. In a silver coffer is preserved the document about the election of Michael Romanoff in 1613 to be Tsar of Russia, and the founder of the present Russian dynasty. Another coffer contains the royal decrees for the foundation of the Patriarchate in Russia. When Peter the Great was strong enough, he did away with the Patriarchate. The power of the Patriarchs as sole heads of the Russo-Greek Church was enormous, and often clashed with that of the Tsar, generally to the advantage of the Church. Peter would not have any rivals, so he constituted himself Head of the Church, abolished the post of Patriarch, and instead appointed as co-heads of the Church the Metropolitans of Kiev, Moscow, and Petersburg. He thoroughly understood the old maxim 'Divide et impera,' and his work was completed by the appointment of a layman to be Procureur of the Holy Synod.

There is no doubt that the little old rooms of the Terem Palace are far more interesting in every way than the modern building. Looking at the plain little rooms, one can hardly realize that this was the palace of a powerful and haughty race of monarchs.



From the Throne-Room one passes into the state bedroom, which is quite a small room, with a square four-poster carved wooden bed. The old silken coverlet is historical, as it was a gift from an old Emperor of China.

Off the bedroom is a small oratory, with various ancient icons and a fine old manuscript Testament. From the oratory runs a small corridor, which is really a gallery, whence one looks down on a long, narrow room below. Tradition says that the old Tsars and Princes used to use this gallery for the purpose of having a good look at the ladies of the Court, who used the room below as a promenade. By Court etiquette, the men saw but little of the ladies, so that the little gallery upstairs was a convenient conning-tower, whence the young Princes could see how the ladies looked in their indoor garments.

To see the present Imperial apartments, one has to return to the main entrance of the palace. Passing through the vestibule, the first room is the dining-room. The walls are of yellow marble; the pine-wood furniture is very handsome and of beautiful workmanship, and there are some handsome statues.

Next is the drawing-room, a white room, with



A DROSHKY DRIVER KISSING HIS HORSE GOOD-MORNING



Louis XIV. furniture, and many beautiful Sèvres vases. The inlaid doors are of great beauty. Thence across an anteroom one enters the Empress's study, the furniture of which is old buhl, and is magnificent. Next is the room of the ladies-in-waiting, with walnut-wood furniture, and beyond that the bed- and dressing-rooms, in which are some very ancient icons in valuable settings.

The Emperor's study is very plainly furnished with bookshelves and ordinary leather chairs, etc. Beyond this are a reception-room and the rooms for the Imperial children.

## CHAPTER XVII

### THE TREASURY, ETC.

THE Treasury, or, as it is called in Russian, the 'Palace of Arms,' is a separate block from the palace, but one can enter from the Winter Garden. At the entrance, in the vestibule, are Peter the Great's carpenter's lathe, some small guns of the time of Pugatcheff's Insurrection in 1774, and some suits of armour of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. On the walls of the staircase are more suits of armour and some historical pictures. The collection in the Throne-Room is most interesting. The most ancient relic is the celebrated Monomakh's cap, which was sent by the Emperor of Byzantium in 1116 to the Prince Vladimir Monomakh. The top is of sable, and it is richly embroidered with pearls and precious stones. In the cap of the Tsar Michael (1627) is a magnificent and unusually large emerald. John's cap (1687) is almost entirely of diamonds, there being more than 900 stones.

The Imperial crown has in it a wonderfully fine and large ruby, which was purchased in 1676 in Peking. There are besides various other historical caps or crowns, such as that of the last King of Kazan, that of the Kings of Georgia, and the Maltese crown, presented by the Maltese to Paul I. in 1798.

There is also a fine collection of sceptres and staffs. The most interesting thrones are the ivory one sent to John III. by the Byzantine Emperor Constantine Palæologus; the diamond throne presented to the Tsar Alexis Michailovitch by the Armenian Commercial Society in 1659; and the Persian throne sent to Boris Godunoff in 1605 by the then Shah of Persia Abbas. There are also various coronation robes and uniforms. It is interesting to notice on the breast of the coronation tunic of the Emperor the little square, which is unbuttoned at the due time in the service, and under which is the bare skin, that the Emperor may be anointed with the holy oil.

In the Trophy Hall are various thrones, also a large collection of flags, captured from the French, Poles, and Hungarians, the keys of various Turkish and Polish fortresses, and portraits of various Russian Emperors and Empresses. It is gratifying

to British visitors to notice that there is not a single British flag exhibited here as a trophy of war. I believe that only one British flag was captured during the Crimean War, and that was from a pinnacle of one of our warships, which was blown ashore during a storm. This flag was sent to Moscow, but the Emperor would not allow it to be exhibited, as it was not taken by Russian prowess. I believe it is preserved in the Treasury, but it is not shown.

In the Silver Hall is a magnificent collection of silver vessels of all sorts, some Russian and others gifts from various nations. Prince Vladimir of Chernigoff's drinking-cup is remarkable for its dimensions—it is 15 inches in diameter. The collection of foreign silver is magnificent. I am assured by many travellers who know our own English collections that we have nothing in England that can compare with the display of old English silver ware exhibited here, all being presents to the Russian Tsars and Emperors. There are also some portraits and statues in the hall.

The remaining halls on the upper story are mainly devoted to collections of armour, weapons, and saddlery. One of the most interesting objects is the helmet and coat-of-mail of Prince Yaroslaff,





BELL-RINGERS



which was found on the field of the Battle of Lipetz, which took place in 1216. Another is the two-pointed sword, 'Zulphigar,' which belonged to Ali. On it, in Persian, is engraved: 'There is no one who is brave save Ali, and there is no sword save Zulphigar.' The saddles presented by the Sultan Abdul-Hamid to the Empress Catherine II. in 1775, and by Selim in 1793, are very handsome, and are studded with large emeralds, turquoises, etc.

In the adjacent halls are fine collections of armour, much of which is historical, and of carpets and ancient saddlery, bows and arrows, quivers, etc. Here is also shown Peter the Great's bed and camp equipment, also the throne of Khivar, which was captured by the Russian troops in 1873.

The old state carriages in Hall 8 are very fine, some of them being of English workmanship. One of these was used by the Empress Elizabeth for her journeys to and from Moscow and Petersburg. Another, presented by Count Razumovsky to the Empress Elizabeth, is striking for its enormous dimensions. In the Town-Hall are two of Napoleon's camp-beds, which were captured at the battle of Berezina in 1812, and two of his dinner services, captured at the same time, of most beautiful workmanship.

There is also a fine collection of old Russian coins. From this collection one sees the origin of the word 'rouble.' The Russian verb *roubeet* means to 'hack off.' The silver was carried about in long thin bars, and the rouble was a piece of a certain thickness which was 'hacked off' the bar. The size and weight of the old copper and bronze coins is enormous, and must have been most inconvenient.

Adjoining the Treasury is a quaint old building—the 'Poteszny Dvoretz,' or Palace of Amusement. This was built by the Tsar Michael early in the seventeenth century as the palace theatre, and was used for mummers, jugglers, etc. Peter I. built a 'Temple of Comedy,' which was then used as the palace theatre, the old 'Poteszny Dvoretz' being converted into a police bureau. About the middle of the eighteenth century it was fitted up as a temporary residence for the Empress, if she stopped at Moscow, and since 1806 it has been used as the official residence of the Commandant of the Kremlin.

## CHAPTER XVIII

### PICTURE-GALLERIES, ETC.

CLOSE to the Kremlin is the Varvarka, or the Street of St. Barbara. In this is an interesting relic of past times, the house of the Romanoff boyars (nobles). This old building was the town house of Nikita Romanoff, whose son Feodor was the father of Michael Romanoff, who, as a lad of sixteen, was elected by the *Zemsky Sobor*, or Meeting of the Land, in Moscow in 1613 as Tsar of Russia, and so was the first of the present Russian reigning dynasty.

Michael's father, Feodor, became, under the title of 'Philarett,' Patriarch of the Russian Church, which was of enormous advantage to his son, the youthful Tsar.

This old building is doubly interesting, for not only is it the cradle of the Romanoff family, but it is the only existing old boyar's house in Moscow. The house is built up the side of the hill, so that from the street it is but one-storied, whereas at the back of the building there are three stories.

Everywhere one sees the Romanoff crest, the rampant lion. The ground-floor is occupied by store-rooms, ice-cellar, kitchen, and servants' rooms. The kitchen is a roomy apartment, and the fireplace is large enough to have cooked a whole ox. The first story is occupied by five rooms. The rooms are long and very narrow, with talc instead of glass in the windows; hence they are rather dark. The first room was the family chapel, which, however, was only used on great festivals. Here are some ancient icons and crosses, and in cases round the room are various articles belonging to Philarett and Michael Romanoff. Next to this was the oratory, which was used daily for family prayer. In the living-rooms are preserved a collection of historical articles—seals, combs, clothing, sticks, Michael's sceptre, sword, etc. Then come two small rooms for the children, one the boys' room, and the other for the girls. The bedroom and ladies' apartments are in the wooden Terem, and here is a fair collection of ladies' garments, looking-glasses, etc. All the furniture and objects shown are strictly historical, but the building itself has been much restored, though the renovations have been made with care, to fit in with the spirit of the old house.







PETROVSKY PALACE

It was the custom that the boyar who was visiting another noble should bow low as he entered the room. However, a noble of higher rank would not demean himself by bowing to another of inferior birth to himself. Old Nikita Romanoff, however, made up his mind that everybody should bow who came to see him, and carefully had the door into his study made less than five feet high, so that it was impossible to enter his presence except in a bowing attitude, or by falling on one's knees. In either case the old gentleman's pride of race was gratified.

Tradition says that Michael Romanoff, the first of the present Russian dynasty, was born in this quaint little old house on the Varvarka; but the question has, I believe, never been decided. Anyhow, this is quite one of the most interesting buildings in Moscow, and is so small that one can see it thoroughly in less than half an hour. In another street just off the Kremlin, the Nikolskaia, or Street of St. Nicholas, is a handsome structure, painted blue, with a very fine Gothic façade. This is the printing-office of the Holy Synod, and was built in 1645. The present building was almost entirely reconstructed in 1814, but the original architectural features were carefully reproduced. In

the library is preserved the very first book—' Acts of the Apostles '—that was ever printed in Russia. This historic work was printed and finished on March 1, 1564, by a deacon named Ivan Feodoroff. It is printed in large type, clear and good. Ivan Feodoroff died in poverty, forgotten by his generation, in the town of Lvoff in 1583, but now his old printing-press is preserved in this building as a valuable relic of the past, and a monument has just been erected to his memory. This printing-office of the Synod furnishes nearly all Russia with Bibles and religious books of various sorts.

What is especially interesting to British subjects is that over the main entrance from the street on the walls figure our British lion and unicorn; the shield, however, has been removed. The walls of the building are green, whereas the lion and unicorn are painted white, so that they stand out well. I have never been able to ascertain any true account of how they came to be placed there. I asked Professor Zabiélin, who is the great authority on ancient Moscow, and his suggestion was that the building originally belonged to the Romanoff family, who put up on it their family crest, the rampant lion. Under the influence of foreign

ideas, he suggests that they added the unicorn to balance the shield and look more symmetrical. I asked the celebrated General Trepoff, when he was chief of the Moscow police, and his explanation is certainly feasible, though, as he added, it was merely his own supposition. He said that in old times the Nikolskaia was called the Posolskaia, or Ambassador Street, and that all the foreign Legates and Envoys used to put up there. His theory was that in all probability some British Envoy had stopped in the building in years gone by, and had put up the British arms, of which now only the lion and unicorn remain.

Opposite the Kremlin Palace, on the other side of the river, is the celebrated Tretiakoff Picture-Gallery. It was originally the private collection of Mr. P. Tretiakoff, a Moscow millionaire. He presented it and the building it is in to the town of Moscow, and he and his brother left a large sum of money for the upkeep of the gallery, and also for buying new pictures. In it there is a small collection of pictures by foreign painters, but the generality are from the brushes of Russian artists, commencing with those of the eighteenth century, in all about 3,000 pictures. The gallery is well worth visiting, were it only for the purpose of

seeing the collection of paintings and sketches by Verestchagin. His pictures of life in Central Asia are splendid—nothing could be better than the gates at Samarkhand, etc.—but what appeals especially to Englishmen is a large series of Indian sketches and studies. Verestchagin was, I think, two years in India, and his Indian sketches are very typical, and appeal strongly to anyone who has ever been in the East in general, or in India in particular. His large paintings of the snows in India—the real objects of his Indian trip—are truly magnificent, but unfortunately they are not in the Tretiakoff Gallery. Verestchagin's pictures and studies are the first ones one sees on entering the gallery. Even in some of his pictures one finds traces of the vein of melancholy which is nearly always present in Russian music, art, etc. I suppose it is the echo in the human soul—quite possibly an unconscious one—to the cruel climate, the horrors of the Tartar yoke, and the state of repression the average Russian knows and suffers under, which calls out this vein of melancholy. However, be the reason what it may, one nearly always finds it present in all examples of Russian art.

Aivazovsky's sea-scapes are also well represented, and worthily so, in the gallery. His treatment of



storms in the Black Sea, surf and sea effects, is often magnificent.

Shishkin's woodland scenes are also lovely. The pine-forest has its own rugged beauty, which does not always appeal to inhabitants of milder climates. However, Shishkin has managed to catch the rugged sternness of the northern landscape, and, as it were, at the same time to put forward Nature's toning down and softening of the harshness. Anything, for instance, more charming than the picture of the bear-cubs in the forest glade would be hard to imagine.

A picture in quite another style demands attention also. This is Riépin's celebrated canvas, 'Ivan the Terrible and his Son.' Ivan had lost his temper with his son, and in his fury hurled his iron-tipped staff at his head. The point entered by the temple and inflicted a terrible wound, from which the young man died in a few minutes. The artist has represented Ivan supporting his son on the ground in his summer palace at Kolomna, and trying vainly to stop the terrible rush of blood. There is blood everywhere—in fact, it is a most revolting picture. However, it is an historical scene, and the face of Ivan is well worth a study: the horror, anguish, and remorse are wonderfully depicted,

and yet the face also expresses fanaticism and fury.

Everything that went wrong with Ivan in after-years he always attributed to God punishing him for this crime. While Ivan was arranging for his marriage with Lady Mary Hastings, and conducting affairs of State in one of the little rooms in the old Terem Palace in Moscow, in rushed a messenger and flung himself down with his head on the ground. I expect the messenger was in a state of terror, for it was a risky business communicating unpleasant news to Ivan, who was apt to become furious and work off his fury on the nearest person, often the unfortunate messenger. When ordered at last to speak, the messenger tremblingly announced that there had been a terrific thunder-storm, that the old wooden summer palace at Kolomna had been struck by lightning and had been burnt to the ground. Ivan's brain at once noted this as the finger of God; his features became livid, and he attempted to rise, but collapsed. He was raised, but was suffering from a stroke, which ended his life in a few minutes.

Another interesting small picture also depicting an historical event in the life of Ivan the Terrible deserves notice, partly for interest of the scene,



which is, I believe, historically correctly drawn, but also as an example of Ivan's extraordinary cruelty. One of his leading nobles had revolted, and had fled to Poland for safety. Thence he sent a messenger with a letter for Ivan. The picture represents Ivan and his suite on the Beautiful Staircase of the Kremlin, Ivan, as usual, leaning on his staff, with a sardonic smile on his grim features. On the step below stands the messenger, proudly reading the letter of the revolted noble. The interest of the picture is that Ivan, partly from inherent cruelty and partly possibly to show his contempt for his noble, has carefully put the point of his iron-shod staff on the instep of the messenger on the step below, and, by leaning on the staff, has driven the point through the foot and pinned it to the stair; the blood is dripping down to the lower steps. The artist has excellently depicted Ivan's cruel smile and the haughty bearing of the messenger, reading the letter from beginning to end without a tremble in his voice, in spite of the excruciating pain he was undergoing.

## CHAPTER XIX

### KREMLIN WALLS, CHURCHES, ETC.

THE original walls of the Kremlin were wooden, but they were constantly suffering from the terrible fires which time after time devastated the town. The old fortress, or Kremlin, was protected on the south by the river ; on the north and west by the swampy stream, the Neglinia ; and on the west by a very deep moat, which was also filled by the Neglinia.

The great fire of 1367 burnt down the whole town and also its protection—the wooden walls of the Kremlin. Acting on the advice of the Metropolitan Alexis and of the nobles, the then Prince of Moscow, Dmitry Donskoi, resolved to construct stone walls. The Russians, however, understood but little about building with brick or stone, and did not know how to select good materials, so that the stone walls did not last long. Towards the close of the fifteenth century Ivan III. had the old walls knocked down, and new stone ones con-



THE RED (OR BEAUTIFUL) STAIRCASE OF THE KREMLIN. (Page 27)



structed, under the superintendence of Italian architects. These old walls are those we see now, but, of course, they have repeatedly been repaired since then. On the walls are built nineteen towers, and there are five gates. One interesting thing in these old towers is that there is no trace of there ever having been a portcullis. Of the towers the most beautiful is the Saviour Tower, built over the gate of the same name (Spassky Gate). The tower is about 62 metres in height, crowned with the two-headed eagle. The lower part of the tower, the gateway, was built in 1491, during the reign of Ivan III., by a Milanese architect, who put up a Latin inscription over the gateway to that effect. The upper part of the tower, of Gothic architectural style, was built in 1626 by a Scotsman of the name of Galloway.

The Scotch have played no mean part in the history and development of Russia. Peter the Great brought back with him a number of Scotch gentry to help him in reorganizing the Russian army, and the tradition is that he kept them in the country by the simple process of never giving them any money with which they might leave. However, many of them seem to have married Russian heiresses, and we find their successors and

descendants now thorough Russian landed gentry, often with their names so altered in their Russian guise that it is difficult to recognize them. Thus the well-known General Klégels is of Scotch origin. In Revel you will find the old Scotch firm of Henry Clayhills and Sons, and the Russian General is a descendant of the original Henry Clayhills who started the branch in Revel. Again, the celebrated 'Russian' poet Lermontoff was of Scotch descent, and of the ancient family of Learmont of Learmont Towers. Lermontoff claimed direct descent from Thomas the Rhymer, who figures in Scott's works. When he wrote his well-known verses, while in exile on the Caucasus, saying how he longed to tread his native heaths and breathe his native mountain air, Lermontoff was certainly not speaking of Russia, but of Scotland. The celebrated General Min, of the Semenoff Regiment of the Guards, who put down the so-called Moscow Revolution of 1905 was really a Scotsman, and many of his relations are registered in the Moscow Consulate. His real name was Main, and his grandfather came to Russia, and becoming a Russian subject, stayed on in the country. For some two or three generations the Governors of Smolensk, a fairly large town near Moscow, were Leslies.

They are fortunate in having their family tree since they arrived in Russia, and have now, I believe, been able to prove their descent from the old Scotch Leslies. Old Mr. Leslie of Smolensk was very much surprised when he learned that the Leslie family itself was not really Scotch, but Hungarian, the original knight Leislaus having come over as chamberlain in the suite of William the Lion's Hungarian bride. He was made a knight of Scotland for saving the Queen's life in fording a river in spate, and the old Leslie shield, with its three buckles and the motto 'Grip fast,' commemorates how she was saved by gripping fast hold of her faithful chamberlain's belt while riding in a pillion behind him.

In Finland you will find troops of Ramsays and other Scotch names, and Scotch names abound in Russia. The celebrated General Skobelev was supposed to be a descendant of the good old Scotch family of Scobel.

In old days the religious processions left the Kremlin by the Spassky Gate and entered by the same, the Patriarch mounted on a donkey, which was led by the Tsar, bareheaded, along the road, which was covered with strips of scarlet cloth. Over the external wall of the gateway is suspended



an icon of our Saviour, which was hung there by Alexis Michailovitch in 1626. The Tsar ordained that no man should pass through the gateway without uncovering his head, and that decree is still in force. I believe that when the Russian *Landsturm*, under Minin and Pojarsky, drove the Poles, in September, 1612, out of the Kremlin and then from Moscow, the attack on the Kremlin was headed by the Patriarch (or the Metropolitan) carrying this same icon, and was made on the Spassky Gate. As the expulsion of the Poles enabled the Russians to call in 1613 a *Zemsky Sobor*, or 'Council of the Land,' who then elected young Michael Romanoff to be Tsar, it is highly probable that Michael's son Alexis would have the icon placed over the scene of the successful attack which paved the way for his father to come to the throne, as also that he should ordain that every man should uncover his head when he passed under the icon.

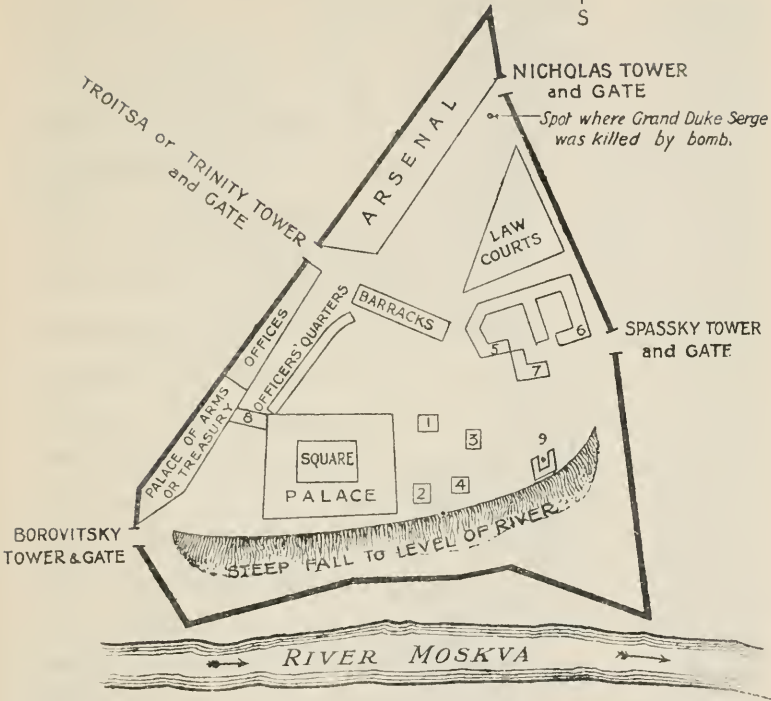
This beautiful gateway and tower had a narrow escape from destruction in 1812. Napoleon ordered the building to be undermined; barrels of powder were placed in position, and the slow matches were lit as the last of the French moved out. Fortunately, the Cossacks galloped up just in time, and extinguished the matches at the risk of their lives.



THE SPASSKY (SAVIOR) GATE OF THE KREMLIN



# PLAN of KREMLIN



1. Cathedral of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin.
2. Cathedral of the Annunciation.
3. Belfry.
4. Cathedral of Michael the Archangel.
5. Chudoff Monastery.
6. Nunnery.
7. Small Nikolai Palace.
8. Winter Garden, with roadway under it.
9. Monument of Alexander II.

Another of the towers of the Kremlin, the one over the Nicholas Gateway, was not so fortunate. It also was undermined and fired by the retreating French, more than half of it being destroyed. Over the gateway is an inscription which states that, though the gate and tower were destroyed, the icon of St. Nicholas, the miracle-worker, which hung there, was absolutely untouched. The old walls themselves are most picturesque, with their battlements. Now that the moat along the western front has been filled in, the river on the southern side enclosed with an embankment, and a raised boulevard under the actual walls, and the old moat on the west and north partly filled in and converted into a public garden, the old walls have naturally lost considerably in appearance, and probably now seem only about half the height they originally were above the soil at their base. However, even now, on the western side, in one or two places they stand up finely. The old towers and bastions are wonderfully picturesque; with their turrets and roofs of quaint old green tiles, they present a thoroughly ancient and Asiatic appearance. It is a strange effect, coming from the bustling and very modern Ilinka and Nikolskaia Streets to cross the road, pass under the old gate-



THE PLACE ROUGE, MOSCOW





ways, and enter the peaceful Kremlin. You are in a second carried back two or more hundred years. The effect is the same as when in England you turn from the busy thoroughfares into a peaceful and ancient cathedral close.

Approaching the Kremlin, one is somewhat prepared for the transition by crossing the so-called Place Rouge, or, as it should be named, the Beautiful Square. This fine open space is bounded on the west by the ancient Kremlin walls; on the east are the splendid *Riadi*, or arcades, built in 1893 for commercial purposes, but in old Russian style of architecture, so that they are by no means out of sympathy with the other surroundings of the square. To the north lies the fine Imperial historical museum, a rather heavy-looking red-brick building, in the old Russian style of the sixteenth century, constructed, however, only in 1875-1883. The other face of the square is occupied by a really wonderful, almost unique, building—the Church of St. Basil the Beatified, of marvellous Russian architecture of the sixteenth century. The origin of the building of the church is as follows: When John the Terrible returned to Moscow, after subduing the last Tartar kingdom and capturing Kazan, he determined to build eight churches on the Place Rouge, to com-

memorate the names of the saints of the days of his eight main victorious battles. He accordingly built one stone church and seven wooden ones. However, the Tsar was not satisfied with them, and resolved to replace the wooden churches with stone buildings. He summoned two of the best Russian architects of the day, and ordered them to prepare plans. These architects completely altered the whole plan of the churches by suggesting, instead of the eight originally intended separate churches, to build one large church, and round it, attached to it, and forming one symmetrical and stately whole, to group eight small churches. The plan was approved by the Tsar, and the nine-domed church was built in 1555-1559. The church has repeatedly suffered from fires, etc., and has at various times been renovated. The last restoration was completed but a short time since. It was entrusted to and looked after by the Moscow Archæological Society, who carefully studied the old archives, and had the old work most exactly reproduced. The result has been very satisfactory ; the sole fault one can find is that the colours of the restored part look too new. However, in a few years they will tone down.

In 1812 the French used the beautiful old church





NOTRE DAME D'IBERIA

as a stable, and looted everything that the clergy had not had time to remove. Napoleon was very much struck with the fine old church. However, his military instincts gained the upper hand, and he decided that, as it interfered with the line of fire, it should be blown up. Accordingly, it was undermined, and preparations made for destroying it. Fortunately, the Cossacks arrived in time to save it from destruction.

Tradition says in connection with the old church that Ivan the Terrible was very much pleased with the building, and sent for the architect. He asked him if there was another similar church anywhere, to which the architect replied no, as it was his own idea, and he had never constructed another. Ivan then asked if such another church could be built, and the architect replied that he was the sole person who could construct such a church, and that, of course, he could build another. On this, Ivan calmly replied: 'Put his eyes out, and then such another church can never be made.'

This tradition is very likely characteristic of Ivan's summary method of settling matters, but I believe it is not true in this instance, and that the architect built another church on very similar lines in the South of Russia.

Almost opposite the old church is a small round stone structure, absolutely plain. This was constructed early in the sixteenth century. The first historical mention of it is that from it Ivan the Terrible made to his assembled people a public confession of repentance for his misdeeds, and promised to rule properly for the future. In those days it was a round brick structure, some ten feet high, surrounded with a wooden fence, and with a roof supported on pillars. In 1786 it was faced with rough stone, and the roof taken away. Ever since the time of its construction all religious processions from the Kremlin have stopped at this the old Lobnoé Miésto, and the chief clergyman present ascends the steps and blesses the people present. From the steps the Tsar led, bareheaded, the donkey on which the Patriarch rode; and here the Patriarchs distributed to the Tsar and his nobles sprays of consecrated palm on Palm Sunday. Till the days of Peter the Great all edicts and decrees were read aloud to the people from the Lobnoé Miésto; here the Tsar presented himself once every year to his people, and here he presented to the people his heir-apparent as soon as the latter was sixteen years of age. It was never used as a place of public execution, but the executions took place



round it. Tradition says that the furious mob tore to pieces here some unfortunate French who happened to be found on the streets when the news of Napoleon's advance on Moscow became public property. This, however, would seem to have been an isolated case. As a rule the prisoners were treated in the most humane manner. The landed gentry took them into their houses, and the French soldier, who might have been a groom, or bootblack, or anything, suddenly found himself a person of position—the French teacher of the family, and the instructor as concerns manners and *le bon ton*. Not a few of these prisoners ended by marrying their fair pupils, and their descendants are still Russian landed gentry.

There are numerous legends current concerning the stay of the French in Moscow and the Russian churches. Thus, it is said that the French stabled a cavalry regiment in the Cathedral of the Assumption. Here is a splendid solid-silver tomb of one of the old Metropolitans. The legend how this tomb remained intact, whereas everything else of value was looted—they carried off five tons of silver ware and nearly one-third of a ton of gold from this cathedral alone—is that when they approached the tomb, lightning came out and played



around; when they retreated from the tomb, it ceased. Thus St. Peter protected his tomb from desecration.

Napoleon was so struck with the beauty, symmetry, and original design of the Church of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin on the Maroseika Street that he placed a guard near and had sentries posted all round it, to protect it from being looted or injured in any way. The church was built either in the reign of Ivan the Terrible or of Boris Godunoff, but the absolute date is not known.

Another church connected with Napoleon and the French invasion is the beautiful cathedral of Our Saviour on the banks of the river a little above the Kremlin. This magnificent structure was built by the Russian Emperors out of their private purse, as a thanksgiving offering to God for the freedom of the nation from the French invasion. The cathedral is a fine example of the so-called Russo-Byzantine style of architecture. The original idea was to build the cathedral on the Sparrow Hills, the highest ground in or near Moscow, and to the south-west of the town on the bank of the Moskva.

According to the plan of the architect Witberg,

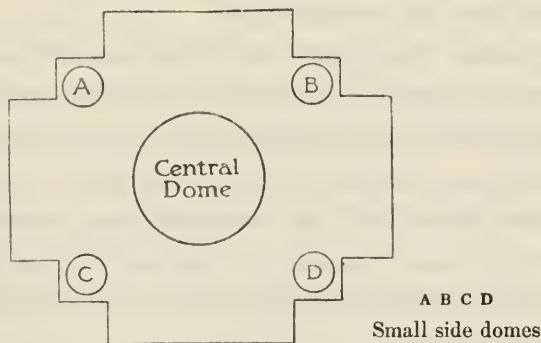


TERRACE OF THE KREMLIN, MOSCOW

*L. H. Brown*



the cathedral was to have been a three-storied building, 770 feet in height. The foundation-stone was laid in October, 1817, with great ceremony. However, after working for over eight years, and expending more than 4,000,000 roubles, the architects came to the final conclusion that the soil on the Sparrow Hills was too uncertain to sustain the weight of the great building, and another site had to be selected.



A new plan was drawn up, and was approved by the Emperor Nicholas I. in 1832; and the foundation-stone was laid, again with great ceremony, in 1839. The cathedral, however, was only completed and consecrated in 1881. The materials used for the building, except a little of the marble, is all Russian, and all the work was executed by Russian workmen.

The cathedral is built in the shape of an eight-sided cross and is supported by thirty-six huge eight-sided pillars. On each of the four shorter sides is a small cupola, while in the centre is a lofty circular tower surmounted by a huge gilt cupola. There are twelve doors, three on each of the four main sides of the cross. Over the doors and on the walls are raised sculpture groups, representing incidents from the Scriptures or from the lives of various saints.

Inside the doors one finds oneself in a broad corridor, which runs right round the building. On the walls of the corridor are a series of white marble slabs, on which, in letters of gold, are inscribed descriptions of the various engagements of the Napoleonic invasion of Russia and the names and rank of those who fell on the Russian side in each engagement.

Passing along the corridor, one enters the actual cathedral, which rests on four huge pillars. Galleries upstairs run round the cathedral over the corridors. The interior of the building is well lit, and is beautifully, but not gaudily, decorated with wall-paintings and designs in various coloured marbles. The reredos of white marble is of exquisite design. The wall-paintings are magnifi-

cent, and are the work of some of Russia's best artists, four of them being from the brush of Verestchagin. The painting of the Trinity in the central dome is unfortunately rapidly fading. The height to the top of the central dome is 340 feet, and each face of the cathedral is 270 feet long.

The inside of the cathedral is far more beautiful than that of any of the other churches or cathedrals in Moscow, and is well lit ; but, of course, it has not the charm of antiquity. The external view of the huge but symmetrical white building, with its golden domes, glistening in the sun, standing out against the bright blue sky, is superb. The building is surrounded by a fairly extensive and tastefully laid-out garden, so that one can walk round the whole building and admire it from different points. It is interesting to find that the Russians tell the same legend about the selection of its present site as the natives of India tell about the selection of the site of the celebrated bridge at Attock. They will assure you that the site the British engineers originally selected for the bridge was some way from the spot where it was ultimately constructed. When the materials began to be collected, it was always found in the morning that they had been miraculously transported to the spot where the

bridge now stands. This excited the curiosity of the engineers, who made soundings, and found at this particular spot a rock in the middle of the river, on which the central supports of the bridge now rest. This, of course, was clear proof to the native mind that this was the work of the river-god, who had taken the British under his protection, and had adopted this means of showing them the best site for the construction of the bridge.

Similarly, when this cathedral was to have been built on the top of the Sparrow Hills, we are told that some mysterious agency regularly transferred some of the materials from the then selected site to that where the cathedral now stands. However, it took the Russian engineers and architects some years before they finally gave up the attempt and fell back on the present site.

Most books say that Napoleon obtained his first glimpse of Moscow from the Sparrow Hills. This, I am assured, is not correct. Napoleon was advancing along the old *chaussée* from Mojaisk, and his first view of Moscow would have been from the Poklon Hill, which is alongside the road, whereas the Sparrow Hills are a long way off. Napoleon, however, did go out to the Sparrow





THE CHURCH OF ST. BASIL IN THE PLACE-ROUGE ON CHRISTMAS EVE. (Page 55)



Hills to have a view of Moscow, as nearly every visitor does. The best time is in the afternoon, and, if possible, after a shower of rain, which lays the dust, that is such a curse of Moscow, and in summer often entirely obliterates the whole panorama. Given favourable conditions, the view from the Sparrow Hills of the winding river, with the new Diévichy monastery in the foreground, and in the background Moscow, with its red and green roofs, its blue or glittering golden domes and cupolas, its white walls, with patches of green foliage showing up here and there, is truly magnificent.

The Novo (or new) Diévichy Monastery, or, as we should say, the 'New Nunnery for Girls,' is beautifully situated on the banks of the river, close by the Sparrow Hills. It was built in 1524 by the Grand Duke Vassili III., the father of Ivan the Terrible, in commemoration of his conquest of the principedom of Smolensk. When Ivan the Terrible's son Feodor died, in 1598, his widow, Irena, came for refuge and shelter to this monastery or nunnery, and with her came her brother, Boris Godunoff. Feodor was weak-minded, if not almost imbecile, and had allowed the control of everything to drift into the hands of his very capable, active, and skilful brother-in-law, Boris Godunoff. Boris had

all the threads in his hands, and felt certain that without him such a muddle would ensue that he would have to be summoned to the throne. At the same time, his family, a Tartar one, was quite insignificant in comparison with the great Russian noble houses ; so had he tried to usurp the throne on his brother-in-law's death, he would have had to fight for it, and would probably have got the worst of the struggle. He was, therefore, well advised in retiring with his sister from the Kremlin, and placing himself within the shelter and sanctuary of the strong monastery walls, whence he announced that he was going to become a monk. All turned out as Boris had calculated, and at last Boris yielded in the monastery to the entreaties of the Patriarchs, the nobles, and the people, abandoned his announced intention of becoming a monk, and accepted the Tsardom.

Here, too, Peter the Great incarcerated his masterful and turbulent sister Sophia. She had constantly tried to wrest the kingdom from his hands, and at last, after her machinations had brought about the mutiny of the rifle regiments, Peter lodged her in this old nunnery, had her hair shorn in token of her having abandoned the world, and she became Sister Susanna.

The nunnery almost perished in 1812, as Napoleon had it undermined, and had the mines fired. It was only saved by the heroic intrepidity of the nuns, who rushed up, at the peril of their lives, and extinguished the fuses.

The old nunneries and monasteries, with their massive walls, which were often mounted with artillery, played no small part as fortresses and places of refuge in past days. It was no uncommon thing for royal and other noble personages, who for political or family reasons were not wanted in the outside world, to be forcibly taken by their relations to the monastery or nunnery, where their heads were shorn and they died to the world in general. Doubtless the coffers of the monastery were never the poorer after such an event. Some fifty miles outside Moscow, on the Yaroslavl line, is the celebrated Troitza (Trinity) Lavra, or Monastery. This was built or started by St. Sergius in 1380, and has played no mean part in Russian history. Here it was that the celebrated Prince Dmitry Donskoi decided to undertake his campaign against the Tartars in about 1380. In the Cathedral of Our Saviour in Moscow is a fine wall-painting by Verestchagin, depicting Dmitry in armour being blessed at the Troitza Monastery by St. Sergius, as

he was starting for the celebrated Battle of Kulikoff. Later on, when the Poles overran Russia, about the time of the election of Michael Romanoff to be Tsar (1613), the monastery was besieged for sixteen months by the Poles ; but the monks and their serfs gallantly defended themselves and beat off all attacks. It was their heroic defence which contributed largely towards the final defeat of the enemy. When one remembers that the wealth of the monasteries was enormous, that the populace of the surrounding district brought all their valuables to the monastery for protection during troublous times, and that the Troitza Monastery was justly celebrated as the richest in Central or Northern Russia, we can well understand why the Poles were so anxious to capture it.

When his sister Sophia raised rebellions against him in 1682 and 1689, Peter the Great found refuge here within the strong walls, and protected by the warlike monks. The walls are over 21 feet thick, so could well stand any amount of battering from the best artillery of those days.

It is said that Sergei-Troitza, as it is called in Russian, contributed well over a million sterling towards the expenses of the Russo-Turkish War, which the Russian clergy largely looked on as a holy



war against the infidel. Whether the amount is true or not it is hard to say, but it is known that the wealth of the monastery is enormous, and that it contributed very largely to the expenses of the war.

Away in the White Sea, north of Archangel, is the well-known Solovetsky Monastery, which was used from early times as an ecclesiastical penal settlement or reformatory for the confinement or banishment of turbulent clerics. One of the sights of the little island on which the old building stands is the innumerable flocks of seagulls. When we were fighting Russia, our fleet appeared in the offing and bombarded the monastery. However, the damage done was virtually nil, and the monks will tell you that it was the seagulls who protected the place. It would seem that the intrepid birds wheeled round our vessels, and so distracted the gunners by pecking at their eyes that they could not aim. Seeing that nothing could be done, the Admiral gave up the attempt, and the monks have ever since requited this good turn of the gulls by liberally feeding them.

It is interesting to note that in the days of Tsar Feodor, towards the close of the seventeenth century, there were 943 churches in Moscow, whereas at the present time there are only about



450, including private chapels. Probably far the greater part of these old churches were wooden buildings, and perished during the numerous fires which devastated Moscow. When I first went to Moscow I was astonished, as probably most visitors are, at the number of churches. I asked a Russian friend if this was a general feature in all Russian towns, or was it a peculiarity of Moscow, and if so, what was the reason. My friend replied briefly: 'It is because Moscow is a city of merchants.' I did not understand the explanation, so my friend continued: 'You probably do not know the old Russian trading proverb, "Unless you swindle, you will never do any business." The old Moscow merchants acted well up to the proverb, and filled their coffers. However, on their death-beds either their consciences reproved them or the counsels of their priest induced them to leave sums of money for building and endowing a church, whereby they "bought out their souls."' Whether this is a true explanation or not I cannot say, but the fact remains that Moscow is certainly very rich in the number of its churches.

There are various churches of foreign faiths in Moscow, such as Armenian, Jewish, Roman Catholic, Lutheran, etc., and among them a very

handsome Anglican church. This church was only completed a few years since, and was built on the same spot where the old British chapel had stood for many a long day. The Anglican churches in Russia—there are only about half a dozen all told—have very exceptional privileges, which were granted them by John the Terrible, and have been renewed, if not amplified, by succeeding Russian monarchs. Thus, they are for all intents and purposes extra-territorial. The old British Factory, or Russia Company, certainly did well in securing these special privileges for their churches, but these worthy gentlemen did not forget the good of their own pockets also. Thus we read that they induced John the Terrible to give them the monopoly of the foreign trade with Russia. This naturally could not last long; it was impossible for a company to control by itself. Another special privilege they secured was that only British ships were allowed to enter any Russian port. This monopoly held good for a long time, and then the company made a concession, and allowed ships of other nations to enter Russian ports; but each foreign vessel that entered a Russian port had to pay a heavy royalty to the British Factory, and this royalty was duly collected and handed over to the

factory by the Russian port officials. However, after a time, as was only to be expected, the factory had to collect their own dues. I think it was only in the last century that the foreign ships refused to pay these royalties, and as the factory had no means of enforcing their demand, the old custom fell through. I had an amusing interview with an *izvoschik*, or driver of the fiacre of the country, over this same point. The man was driving me, and I asked him some questions. After some few sentences, he asked me what nationality I was, and on my saying I was an Englishman, to my intense astonishment, he spoke to me in very fair English. When I asked him when he learned the language, he said that he came from Cronstadt, and that his family for generations had been *izvoschiks* there. As all, or very nearly all, the vessels that came into that port were British, every one, or nearly all, of the *izvoschiks* spoke some English. I asked him why he had left, and he amused me by saying that the good old times had passed, that now all sorts of foreign ships came, and the people on them would not speak English, but would speak their own languages—French, German, or what not. He really was not going to take the trouble to learn these outlandish languages, and they so spoilt his





THE FIRE BRIGADE

The horses are trained to follow the dog

temper and his earnings that he decided to leave Cronstadt and come to Moscow, where he would only hear Russian. However, he was very disappointed, as any amount of his fares spoke foreign languages he did not understand. This was at the time of the Boer War, and he astonished me by suddenly saying, 'What lucky people you English are! you are always fighting somewhere. We Russians never have any luck; we have not had a row since the war with 'Turkey.' I asked him what he meant, and he said that the population was getting much too thick, and that they wanted a good war to thin them out a bit. 'Why,' he said, 'thirty years ago there were only a few hundreds of us *izvoschiks* in Moscow, and now there are as many thousands. There are far too many people in Russia—that is why we are all so poor now. *Dai Bog skoro budet voina*'—that is, 'Please God, we shall soon have a war.' I never met him again, but his wish was certainly soon fulfilled, and possibly he was one of the victims.

There is little doubt that the great fire of Moscow in 1812—at the council of war at Fili it was decided to abandon the city without fighting, having previously destroyed all stores and set it on fire, when over three-quarters of the



whole town was burnt down—was really a blessing in disguise. With the fire vanished most of old Moscow, the quaint old wooden houses of which old travellers have left accounts, and Napoleon was so enraged at the failure of his plans that he intended to burn or destroy what was left. However, heavy rain and the rapid advance of the Cossacks prevented much damage being done, except in the Kremlin itself. When the population returned, Moscow was burnt out; and when it was rebuilt—though doubtless the new town lost much in picturesqueness—it gained enormously in better construction, wider and straighter streets, etc. It is interesting to note that the population then was only 251,000, whereas now it is just on 1,400,000.

Another result of the fire was that it quite did away with the old aristocratic life of Moscow. Few of the nobles returned to Moscow—most of them seem to have stayed in Petersburg—and Moscow more and more developed into a manufacturing and commercial town, which character it has maintained ever since. At the present time there are very few aristocrats in Moscow, and such as there are are so almost entirely owing to local official positions or to connection with the University.



The Imperial Moscow University is the oldest in Russia, having been founded in 1755, in the days of the Empress Elizabeth. The old buildings of the University, together with the whole of the library, of many thousands of volumes, and some very valuable scientific collections, all perished in the great fire of 1812. The new buildings are of very ordinary architecture. The library now contains over 200,000 volumes and some 20,000 manuscripts, and the number of students is about 11,000. However, owing to political disturbances and serious internal and external causes, the amount of work done in the University for several years past has unfortunately been very small.

If visitors and tourists even now are struck by the original and individual character of Moscow, when so many of the old houses and historical buildings and monuments have disappeared, and blocks of modern buildings are being run up in all directions, what would they not say if they could see the old Moscow at the time of its glory, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when the Court and the nobles were still living there and keeping up their quaint old-time wooden houses? Moscow was then the artistic centre of all Russia as, now it is the greatest commercial centre. However,

Moscow has not contented itself with commerce alone, but is one of the greatest artistic, musical, and educational centres also, and these advantages have probably more to do with the extraordinarily rapid increase of its population during the past fifty years than anything else, although it is true that very many have moved into town recently, as they feel safer there than on their estates in the country.

Another thing that added to the beauty of the Moscow of those days was the amount of open spaces and foliage. Except in the Kremlin and the Kitai City, the business centre, the houses seem to have mainly stood well apart from each other, each in its own extensive grounds. The houses themselves, mainly wooden, were gaily painted and very much ornamented. However, other matters were not so pleasant. Virtually none of the streets were paved in any way, so that the mud was often terrible.

It is interesting to note, as a proof of how little the old Russians liked to live in stone houses, that when Ivan III. was rebuilding the royal apartments in the Kremlin, at the commencement of the sixteenth century, he had all the dwelling part made of wood, and only the reception-rooms were of

stone. It is believed that the old Russians thought stone houses were unhealthy.

Having learned from the Italian architects, who were summoned by Ivan III. to build the Assumption and Archangel Cathedrals and the walls of the Kremlin, the arts of building in brick and of manufacturing good brick, the Russians began to build brick churches and houses, but copied the designs of their old wooden churches and houses. The Russians are also indebted to the Greeks for their wall-paintings and the frescoes we see so largely used for adorning their churches.

Moscow was at the height of its own original style of architecture in the seventeenth century, but from the days of Peter I. we find the ordinary Western European style coming in more and more. Thus the Arsenal in the Kremlin, built about 1730, is totally different in style from any of the old buildings there. Peter's days, in fact, were an epoch in Russian architecture. He it was who ordered that the houses should no longer be built surrounded by spacious courts and gardens, but in rows on the street, with iron or tile roofs; he also ordered that all new houses in the Kitai Gorod, or business centre, should in future be constructed of stone or brick, and had the streets paved there in

1720. He also invited artists from abroad, and instituted a 'Chancellerie of Buildings,' which was to inspect the plans of new houses and introduce Western styles as much as possible.

Catherine II. decided to knock down the old Kremlin Palace, and build a modern one instead. However, nothing more happened than the destruction of several of the old buildings and the drawing up of a plan for a new palace.

Fortunately, the great fire at the time of Napoleon's invasion and the number of buildings that were blown up gave the authorities virtually a free hand in superintending the laying out of the new city. The streets were greatly straightened; the old wooden houses, with their original architecture and large gardens, were replaced by stone buildings, mostly in the Empire style, and built in rows.

The schools of architecture, after the defeat of the French, under the influence of the wave of national pride and enthusiasm, again began to study the old Russian style of architecture, and we see the results of this influence in the splendid cathedral of Our Saviour and in the triumphal arch, which latter is in the old classical style.

However, from the middle of the nineteenth century Moscow became more and more a trading and

commercial centre; railways began to be constructed, and factories to be built after the styles prevalent abroad, so that very rapidly Moscow lost its old originality, and tended to become more and more like any other great European city. Although the buildings were in the ordinary European style, architects introduced the old Russian styles of ornamentation, which, however, was often so idealized as to be quite different from the ancient ideas. Every year more and more of old Moscow disappears, and the city becomes less and less like the original ancient city. Beyond a very occasional old house and church, the main streets are now composed of modern buildings of three, four, or six stories, whereas old Moscow was almost entirely one-storied, with a sprinkling of two-storied houses.

This change in architecture has been accompanied by a change in the inhabitants also. Fifteen years ago in winter the streets were uniformly dull. The men were all hidden in black greatcoats, lined with fur, nearly always with astrakhan collars and caps. The ladies nearly always wore black cloaks lined with fur, with collars of the same, and little pork-pie-shaped fur caps. The fashionable ladies never walked; it was considered impossible for a well-

dressed lady to walk on the streets. If you saw a smartly-dressed lady, you were pretty safe in judging her to be a foreigner or an actress. However, now *nous avons changé tout cela*, and you will find troops of smartly-dressed ladies promenading up and down the Kuznetsky Most, our Moscow Bond Street, any day of the year, except possibly in the summer, when everybody who possibly can clears out of Moscow, which is a wretched place to be in during hot weather.

The shops also have greatly changed in the last few years. Up to fifteen or twenty years ago the Russian shops virtually showed nothing in their windows, and very little inside. Everything was stowed away, and had to be unpacked when wanted. This is very much better now: the windows have large plate-glass fronts, and in them have quite good displays. Some of them evidently pay great attention to having their windows smartly decorated.

The employés in the shops are also improving. Fifteen years or so ago it was quite a common thing to go into a shop and see groups of the employés chatting among themselves. After a due wait one of them would saunter over and ask what you wanted. When you said, he would say, 'Do you want much?' If you replied affirmatively, he





A STREET VENDOR OF SALT HERRINGS





would brisk up somewhat and serve you ; if, on the contrary, you wanted a small amount, the odds were he would reply, 'Sorry, we have not got it,' and stroll back to resume his interrupted gossip with his comrades.

The shops in Moscow are now so good that many people come from Petersburg for dresses, etc. A night in the train is nothing in Russia, and the expresses are so arranged that you leave in the evening and arrive at your destination in the early morning.

## CHAPTER XX

### SOCIAL AND OTHER CHARACTERISTICS

THE two features of the Russian character which struck me most when I first went to Russia were their great hospitality, to which I have already alluded, and their lawlessness. By this I mean their absolute contempt for laws of all sorts. Thus, on every railway carriage there are painted up orders that passengers are not to stand on the platforms outside. In the summer you will find the platforms crowded to such an extent that it is often almost impossible for the ticket-collectors to get from carriage to carriage. The railway officials protest and protest, but all the public are always united against the officials. 'If we are not to travel on the platforms, you must put on more carriages.' The public know perfectly well that as a rule the railway company has not more carriages or rolling stock available, and also, probably, that it would be unsafe for a heavier train to run than is already formed up; but that does not matter: they

all side against the company's officials. The same thing always occurs on the trams, and again the public is nearly always united against the unfortunate tram official who tries to enforce the law. When the police try to regulate the traffic the drivers all argue the question, and their fares and the public are always against the police.

You will find this strange objection to abiding by the law prevails everywhere in Russia. If a law exists, everybody seems to consider it his bounden duty either to flatly refuse to acknowledge it or, more generally, to see how he or she can manage to get round it with the least unpleasant consequence for himself or herself. This lawless spirit, about which I have often spoken with Russians and others who know the country well, is put down by most foreigners to the absolute lack of anything approaching discipline that prevails nearly everywhere, and also very largely to the system of perverted ultra-kindness with which the young Russian is treated.

This commences from his or her infancy. It is apparently regarded as a family disaster if a child should cry. If he demands anything, whether good or bad, it must be given or he might cry. A child may apparently do any amount of damage if

he desires to, for he must not be thwarted in any way—it would break his spirit and spoil his character. This being what he remembers from his infancy, it is not strange that when the child gets a little older he recognizes that he has only got to make enough fuss and make himself sufficiently objectionable to always carry his point. Consequently, you find that the children dominate the household. It is a common thing to go to an evening party and see small children of five or six years old sitting up till two or three in the morning. When you ask why they are kept up, you are told: ‘Oh yes, of course it is very bad; but what is to be done?—the children have decided that they won’t go to bed till all the guests have gone.’

Then the boy goes to school, but even here he learns no ideas of discipline. The dominating theory now as concerns schools is that the pupils must never be punished. Again you are told it would break their spirits and spoil their characters. The school is to be run and the boys’ characters formed by moral suasion. The result naturally is that the boys domineer and boss the school. A friend of mine is one of the English masters in a big school in Moscow. Recently one of the boys was making himself a nuisance, and my friend



IN THE ENVIRONS OF MOSCOW: AWAITING THE POSTMAN





scolded him. The boy replied with an absolutely obscene remark and gesture. As no master can punish a boy, all the teacher could do was to order the boy to leave the room and report the case to the principal, imploring him to uphold the authority of the teachers by making an example of the boy. The principal summoned—he probably did not care to take upon himself the responsibility of deciding on any action—a meeting of masters to decide what should be done. All the foreign masters voted solid for making an example of the boy, and all the Russian masters were opposed to any punishment. As no decision was come to unanimously, another meeting was called, with a like result, and then a third. I think, so far as I remember, that the foreign masters saw the case was a foregone conclusion, and so either did not attend the last meeting or abstained from voting. Anyhow, the final decision was that the boy should not be punished, but should be asked not to be objectionable in future.

This in English schools would seem a fairy-tale, but the simple explanation is that the boys dominate over the masters. A master has to get through a certain amount of work with his form per term or per year ; also, his pupils must show

that they are making some progress; otherwise, naturally, the master is voted useless and loses his post. He is not allowed to punish the boys; also, he is often not supported by the head-master. He has to earn his bread and butter, and so he finds it advisable to stand in with his pupils. He keeps on good terms with them, work goes on, and the apparent results are satisfactory; but the boys know that they dominate the situation. They dominated the situation at home; now they dominate the school; and from that they pass into the University, when they naturally expect to continue the process. Here, however, they unexpectedly run upon opposition. The Government are not going to let the students run the Universities, for from that to trying to run the country would be too easy a step.

I remember some eight years ago an English lady came to me and asked me to help her. Her son was a student in the Moscow University, and he had been arrested, tried, and was sentenced to five years' banishment to Archangel. I inquired into the case, and learned that a party of students, about twenty of them, with, of course, two or three *coursistki*, or lady-students, had armed themselves, seized the quarters of one of the professors in the

University buildings, where they barricaded themselves in, hung a red flag out of the window, and proclaimed that they would never surrender, also that they were 'drawing up a Constitution for Russia.' The police seem to have been quite sensible: they simply surrounded them and starved them out, with the result that they got five years' exile apiece. As a matter of fact, some Imperial event happened very shortly afterwards, an amnesty was proclaimed, and these aspiring youthful politicians were let off.

This incident occurred before the real rows started, and when the police still dealt leniently with the students. Had it taken place recently, there would probably have been some fighting and various deaths on either side.

This is the first time that the youths begin to feel what authority means. They have not known what it is, and so they kick against it. Naturally, the more you kick against a prick the more you hurt yourself, whereas had they been educated from the first to keep within bounds, they could probably have got along without feeling the pricks—at all events, they would have known better than to kick violently, which naturally hurts themselves most.

Though one can hardly sympathize with the student's apparent firm conviction that he and his fellows are heaven-born statesmen, who could make Russia a perfect paradise if they 'bossed the show,' one cannot help feeling sympathy for them, and still more pitying them.

The Russian University is totally different from our old Universities. There are no colleges in which the students live; they live where and how they like. Again, the fees are extraordinarily small. I should think we might say for certain that 80 per cent. of all the students at the Moscow University—and there are, all told, about 11,000 of them—are, from one point of view, miserably poor. Their annual income is probably not more than £35 a year, out of which they have to pay their University fees and procure board and lodging, clothe themselves, buy books, etc. Naturally, this is insufficient, so they supplement it by giving lessons, by playing in orchestras, singing in the theatre choruses, and in the vacations by acting as ticket-collectors on the railways, etc.

Again, they have no sports of any sort whatever. The Universities are much too poor to find the money for purchasing land for playing-fields, and now it is a moot question, if the appliances and





BEGGARS. (Page 93)



land were forthcoming, whether one could imbue the taste for sport or athletics into the students, or whether, which is most probable, they would not vote sports a relic of barbarism, and refuse to have anything to do with them.

Again, they have no debating societies or anything of that sort, and finally, the professors are officials, appointed virtually by the Government and depending on the Government. Their duty is simply to read their lectures, but it is no part of their duty to mix with the students, to try to guide or form their ideas, and so on. Hence, the students are a sort of no man's lamb, and no guiding hand is stretched out to indicate the safest path to take. They are all young fellows or girls with a considerable amount of energy, and with the desire, common to all young people, to distinguish themselves before their compeers and to work off the natural superfluous energy of youth. At the same time, what is the unfortunate student to work his energy off in?—no sports, no debating clubs, nothing to which he can attach himself openly. Is it wonderful that he kicks against the pricks, broods on his own personal misfortunes, then thinks the University is run in a pretty rotten manner, then that the whole country is also sadly in need



of reform, and ultimately becomes a rabid politician, and in nearly every case is 'agin the Government'?

One can understand the pleasure of attending illegal political meetings. To understand it fully, it is necessary to know that in Russia, according to law, three persons conversing or standing together constitute a meeting, so that any three students chatting together outside the University buildings on any topic of the day—and few topics are totally unconnected nowadays in Russia with something depending on the Government—can always be construed by an energetic policeman into an illegal political meeting.

When the so-called Moscow Revolution was in swing, and for some time after, the police, who walked about armed with loaded rifles and fixed bayonets—still the case in many parts of Moscow—had always the right to disperse any 'meeting' (*i.e.*, group of three or more persons who stood a minute to pass the time of day) by the simple expedient of 'firing into the brown.' I remember one day meeting a couple of friends and stopping to talk. One of them suddenly said, 'I say, we are an illegal political meeting; I'm off,' and promptly left us. It was distinctly humorous, but easily might have been quite the reverse.

When one thinks of all these disadvantages, I think no British subject can help pitying the unfortunate Russian student, though in all probability the students themselves would be greatly surprised if they knew what were the grounds for the pity.

In Russia no one can obtain any Government post, can become a lawyer or a doctor, without having 'passed out' of a University—*i.e.*, without having put in the requisite number of terms and having passed successfully the Government exam. at the end. Naturally, the result is that the Universities are always crammed.

Of the total number of students in the Moscow University—some 11,000—there is a small party of Social Democrats and Revolutionaries. Every student calls himself a member of one of the political parties—a Monarchist, Kadet, Octobrist, etc.—but the smallest party is that of the combined Socialists and Revolutionaries; and yet we find this tiny party domineer the whole University, for the simple reason that they have a good organization and good discipline, whereas the other parties have not.

This party it is that nearly always is the instigator of the University rows, who insists on calling political meetings, which they know will lead to the

closing of the University, and so on ; and if you ask the rest of the students why they allow themselves to be thus cowed by a handful, whereas they themselves are thousands, they sadly admit that it is because the Socialists have discipline and organization, whereas they themselves have not. They know that year after year the University is closed, that the examinations are not held in consequence, or are held at irregular intervals ; they know that without passing the exams. they cannot start on their professions, but have to stay on in penury year after year, and yet they cannot apparently throw off their apathy and rise and assert themselves. It is a strange thing that in all these years of unrest no leader has appeared on any side. The Government is a connected body, with discipline and plans, but the people are not, and until some leader arises who knows what he wants and enforces his will on his followers, instead of trying the impossible—*i.e.*, trying to formulate a programme in which everybody's pet scheme and theory is to be included—it is hard to see how a disunited people can ever hope to cope with, or get the better of, a strong body, that knows what it wants, and is prepared to enforce its wishes.

It is interesting to meet these same students

some years afterwards, when they have entered Government employ, and to see how their ideas have altered. I met one of them who as a student had been very advanced in his views. He assured me the students were a curse, and that the only salvation for Russia would be to wipe out the whole male population between the ages of sixteen and twenty-five. This sounds a very tall order, but I have often heard very similar opinions expressed by people who should know something of what they are talking about. Every big employer of labour in Russia will tell you that it is the boys and the young men who give all the trouble. When a man is married and has a wife and family to feed, it stands to reason that he thinks a good many times before he risks losing his employment. The young bachelor, however, does not mind risking it. He has only himself to think of, and Russia is an ideal country for beggars. The Russians think that if you refuse to give to a beggar, and he curses you, evil is bound to befall you. Hence in the towns, at all events, I believe it is an unknown thing for anyone to die of starvation. The boys begin taking an interest in politics—and the girls too—from their early teens. A teacher in one of the Moscow schools told me that quite a short time

since every boy in one of his classes—average age fifteen to sixteen—carried a revolver, and was a political agent in his own little way. These school-boys and schoolgirls take quite an active part in disseminating illegal literature, and many of them assisted in building the barricades during the late disturbances. Poor little chaps! they have no football nor cricket on which to work off their superfluous energy. I much doubt whether they have much physical energy they could spare for games, for they are usually fagged out by the end of school. Work begins at 9 a.m. Each lesson lasts fifty minutes, which gives ten minutes' interval for the boys to stretch their legs, and for the air in the classrooms to get a little purer before the next lesson begins. Work thus continues till 11.50, when there is a break till 12.30, which is allowed for lunch. After that work recommences and continues till nearly three. This six hours straight off, without any fresh air—for the boys are in the corridors when not in the classrooms—and with probably no food from, say, 8 a.m., when they leave home, till about 4 p.m., when they return, with the exception of a piece of bread or a bun during the break, is enough to sap any growing boy's energy, strength, and vitality, especially when it is added

that the classrooms are generally too small for the number of boys in them, and are nearly always kept far too hot. Teachers have often told me that virtually no work is done in the after-break hours, especially in the last lessons, and that it is useless to try to get the boys to work; they are simply overtired — fagged physically and mentally. I believe that it is pretty generally admitted that this system of long-continued hours of instruction is a failure; but the difficulty is how to alter it, owing to climatic reasons. The scholastic year commences about the beginning of October, and ends about July. Thus, for the generality of the time the days are short. It would be very trying for the boys to always work half the time by artificial light, and the parents would most certainly object if their children had to go to school twice a day, and especially if they had to return home when it was dark.

When the recent revolution started in Moscow, the first house that was bombarded was almost opposite the one in which I was staying. The police got news that the revolutionary party had a meeting there, at which all the leaders were present, where plans were being drawn up for seizing the Kremlin, the Governor-General's house, and the



public offices. Troops were accordingly quietly brought up, and the two streets on which the house opened were blocked. When the military and police measures had been taken, the police advanced to the entrance—the meeting was going on upstairs—to demand that all should surrender and come out. However, they found that the staircase was held by the revolutionaries. There were seated on each step two or three young fellows, every one of them with his revolver in his hand, and they said to the police: ‘If you want us, come and take us.’ More troops were summoned, and after long hours of ineffectual parleying, it was decided to carry the house by assault. The storming party formed up in a neighbouring courtyard, and advanced at the double. However, it was greeted with volleys of revolver-shots from the windows and by two bombs, which, if I remember rightly, killed one officer and mortally wounded another and several men. The attempt to carry the building by storm was then abandoned, and it was decided to bombard it with artillery. The guns were posted some 200 yards away—out of revolver-shot—and one gun fired a round of shrapnel. Then the officer in charge of the troops demanded to know if they would surrender, but revolver shots





REFRESHMENTS—COFFEE AND VODKA



were the response. This went on till the guns had fired about nine rounds, when the defenders of this *fort chabrol* announced they were willing to surrender. Numerous people from the neighbouring houses were at their front-doors, watching the proceedings and speculating on the result of the gun-fire. As a matter of fact, the damage done by the shrapnel was really very small. When the shell hit the walls, it made a hole about 2 to 3 feet deep, with a diameter of about 6 feet, but did not go through, as the walls are over that thickness. Such shells as entered the windows only burst on striking the inner walls, and nearly all the damage was done in the adjoining flat, where was a museum.

We were naturally most anxious to see the defenders come out. They were about ninety boys of from eighteen to perhaps twenty and about ten young women of a similar age. It is known that there were some 500 people at that meeting, but the youthful defenders kept the troops busy for some hours while the leaders all escaped into other adjacent buildings.

Many school boys and girls took an active part in the street fighting, so that the school contingents are quite a force that has to be taken into con-

sideration. The mass of the school boys and girls are certainly the same as the traditional Irishman—'agin the Government.' However, when these young fellows and women grow up, they generally calm down a good deal, and, though they still chafe at the various restraints from which they suffer, they are more inclined to adopt the part of the Passive Resister, and to defend their political opinions by more constitutional and peaceful methods.

## CHAPTER XXI

### CUSTOMS AND INSTITUTIONS

THE population of European Russia is increasing at the rate of about 1,500,000 per annum ; and this tremendous increase is merely the survival of the fittest. The rate of infant mortality in Moscow is 30 per cent. ; in the North of Russia it is more like 70 per cent.

The Russian peasant-woman has not much time to devote to nursing her babes ; she has to be out working hard in the fields or elsewhere, and cannot take her infant with her. Before she starts she takes a hard crust of black bread, ties it up in any bit of old rag, and hands this, with a cup of milk, to the child left in charge—often almost an infant. ‘ If baby cries, dip the crust in the milk, and put it in his mouth.’ The crust thus does duty certainly one day, but quite as likely as not the same bit is used day after day. It is marvellous what vitality these infants must have to survive at all, and yet

we see the population is steadily progressing by leaps and bounds.

During the summer the youngsters live on bread, cucumbers, and any fruit they can secure ; and yet as a rule they look healthy enough.

The Russian peasant, needless to say, does not know of any such thing as a tooth-brush, and yet their teeth are usually beautifully white and apparently sound. The explanation is, I believe, that the constant gnawing of the hard crusts of the black bread takes the place of the use of the tooth-brush.

What the peasant really loves in winter is taking a hot bath. Over the stove he builds a brick bath, and it is his joy to sit in this and simply boil himself. When the heat gets too much even for him, he rushes to the door, opens it, and, rushing out into very likely a temperature of 20 to 30 degrees below zero, rolls in the snow till he is cooler, when he returns and continues his bath. This would kill most people, but it apparently does him no harm. It is certainly a fact that they can stand extraordinary heat and intense cold equally well.

One can well understand what magnificent soldiers such men make—very hardy, no nerves, splendid physique, and accustomed to the simplest



PEASANTS VISITING MOSCOW





fare, and generally an insufficiency of that. All that they want is leading. I should think a Russian regiment would stand heavier loss without losing heart or getting demoralized than any other European regiment. Another charming thing about them is that they are fatalists. It does not matter what you do—everything is predestined; hence you really need not worry. The odds are you will pull through somehow; but if you don't, it clearly was so intended, and it is useless to try to avoid your destiny.

This is a very comfortable theory, but it is apt to be rather awe-inspiring to other nationalities. You are being driven, and you come to a ticklish place, which apparently needs careful driving. Your driver, who always has some foot of loose rein dangling, gaily whips up the horses. You suggest he should take up the reins and drive a bit carefully. However, he merely laughs and says carelessly: 'Avos proyedem' (With any luck we shall get along all right). If you come to grief, he merely remarks that Fate was against you. He himself is apparently quite content with this, but to Westerners it seems cold comfort.

When the Russo-Japanese War was brewing, as an ex-officer I naturally took a keen interest in

what was going on, and often discussed the chances of either side with friends—officers or others—who knew the people or army of either side. We who knew the Russian nature and army anticipated a win for Russia. We were certain that her army at first would have very hard knocks, but we trusted to the weight of numbers and the splendid qualities and physique of the rank and file to ultimately win; and so, undoubtedly, the war would have ended had it been carried on a little longer. I think we may safely predict that will be the result if the two kingdoms ever come to blows again. We all considered the officers the weak point of the army. The Russians, as a race, are most peaceable people, and the fighting instinct—the love of fighting—is not a leading feature in their character. In all the years I have been in Russia I have never seen a man fighting drunk. Drunkards I have seen by the thousands, but they have always been most affable. Their inclination was not to go for you, but rather to embrace you, or fall on your neck and weep. With this peaceable instinct as the dominant key to take into consideration, it is easily to be understood that the Russian Government was face to face with a difficult problem in officering their huge army. The pay is small, and only a

small proportion can hope to really rise and secure the fat billets. Certainly the corps of officers has numerous privileges. They pay second-class fares and travel first, and third-class fares and travel second on the railways; they pay reduced rates at the theatres; their living is cheap; their uniform is smart but cheap, and the officer's tailor's bill is probably less than the civilian's; they get promoted every four years—till the rank of Major—and they have no examinations to pass once they receive their commissions, to say nothing of medals and orders, which follow as a matter of course to anyone who is in Government employ in Russia, and the glamour which always attaches to an officer in military countries. However, all these attractions would not have sufficiently officered the Russian Army, and something more was requisite. This something has been devised, and is the system of military schools. The Government offers to take the son or sons of every officer of the rank of a Captain or upwards, from the age of, say, ten, and to educate them as officers, to feed, clothe, and house them gratis. This continues till they have finished the military school, on which they pass into the *junker's* school, which corresponds to our Sandhurst. Here, again, the Government gives every-

thing free till the young fellows finish and are commissioned as officers, when it gives each of them a sum of money towards the purchase of his uniform. In return for this all that is demanded is that the young fellow has to serve for six years as an officer.

At first sight this seems wonderfully little to give in exchange for all these years of free tuition, board and lodging. However, when the young officer, at the age of twenty-six or twenty-seven, has put in his six years of service, and he is free to leave the army, the question comes up, What is he to do? He has received a special education, which fits him only to be an officer; he is worse educated than his compeers who studied in an ordinary school, as so much of his time was taken up with military subjects; in a word, the difficulties of starting afresh in civil life are so innumerable that nearly all stay on as officers. Thus the supply of officers is guaranteed. However, these youngsters, who are thus dedicated by their parents to be future officers, undoubtedly, as they arrive at years of discretion, are not all keen to be officers. Their wishes were never consulted, and undoubtedly many of them would never have wished to enter the army. However, there they are, *volens volens*, and there, as I





SOLDIERS DANCING IN BARRACKS



have described before, they find they have to remain. So they stay on and serve. They have no examinations to pass, promotion comes regularly every four years, orders and honours follow continually, so they stay on. But between staying on and taking an active interest in your work is a great step; and it stands to reason that a man who finds himself in a post which supports him, though he does not like it, and cannot see his way to procure congenial work, must stick to what he has; but he is not likely to trouble himself much, or to be keen in studying the profession in which he takes no interest whatever. Under this system of recruiting officers it stands to reason there must be a large proportion of the officers who come under this category.

The Russian Army—though, naturally, nearly all of its officers are gentry by birth—does not preclude the private soldier from rising and distinguishing himself. Skobelev's father started as a private soldier. By sheer gallantry and hard fighting he rose to the rank of Brigadier-General. The case of the Skobelevs is, I should think, unique, the father commanding a brigade in his brilliant son's division.

'Papa Linievich,' as his men called him, who succeeded Kuropatkin in the command of the

Russian forces during the recent war, was another soldier who fought his way up from the ranks. In fact, he twice won a commission, as he was broken for some offence, but for renewed gallantry was given another commission. What holds good in the army is good also in civil life, and, though Russia is so wonderfully aristocratic, it is astonishing how many men have risen to the highest posts from the ranks of the 'grey peasantry' by sheer force of intellect. As an example of this we may allude to Count Witte, so long Russia's well-known Minister of Finance, who started life as one of the humblest employés on a railway in the South, and who rose to his present position thanks to his brilliant talents. Many of the best-known professors in the Universities were humble peasants and the children of peasants. It is, of course, most desirable for a peasant to pass through the University, as that gives him the status of a 'gentleman,' and if he secures honours or post at the University that makes his descendants 'gentry' also. There is a great difference between serving in the ranks of the Russian Army as an ordinary private and, after finishing your education, serving as a 'one-year volunteer,' which is all those who have passed a certain standard of education have to do. Also.

when these 'volunteers' have finished their year, they pass an examination and become officers of the reserve. The ordinary peasant, after his military training, enters the reserve, and his services, if required, are again as a private. The educated ex-peasant, if called up for active service, is now an officer. This alone is a tremendous inducement for the peasants to have a bright lad educated. The country clergy are almost entirely recruited from the peasant classes, and you will see them ploughing their own land just as any other peasant.

The Greek Church is one that appeals wonderfully to the senses. I don't know if the peasants understand much of the dogma, but they evidently love the services. You will find the early morning services crowded with men. The beautiful singing—no instruments whatever are allowed, so it is purely vocal—the incense, and the deep-toned chants are wonderfully attractive. I have often wondered how the priests are trained to have such wonderfully deep tones. Russia is certainly the land for bass voices, and many of the best operatic basses started life in a seminary, and were originally to have been singing deacons, or even choristers. The Russian church is, to our minds, free and easy. You can enter and walk about it when service is

going on ; no one interferes with you. There are no pews ; you stand where you like, and if you are tired of standing, you can kneel. The vestments of the priests are usually gorgeous, the singing beautiful, and the whole service is mystic and appeals to the senses. The priest comes in from behind the altar-screen, sings his part, and retires ; then another priest appears, and so on. And yet there is a great similarity in many respects between the Greek ritual and our own. Their Litany, many chants and prayers, are almost identical. In one respect they differ : there are no sermons. However, the Russians don't complain ; they doubtless know it is not given to every parson to be a good preacher. However, if sermons were the rule of the day, I expect the Russian preachers would outshine our clergy. I attended one or two sittings of the Imperial Duma—the first one in St. Petersburg—and the thing that struck me almost more than anything else was what extraordinarily good speakers they all were. I have had the same said to me repeatedly by others. The Russians undoubtedly, as a race, are wonderfully good speakers ; they never seem to be at a loss for a word or an idea.

I notice in the papers that young Count



THE POOR OF MOSCOW WARMING THEMSELVES AT STREET FIRES  
IN WINTER





Soumarokoff was killed in a duel recently. Some time in last century a Mr. Elston, a young Scotsman, went to Russia, and earned his livelihood as a teacher of the English language. One of his pupils was the young Countess Soumarokoff. Teacher and pupil fell in love with each other, got engaged, and finally married. The young bride was the last of her race, an ancient and distinguished Russian noble family. She applied to the then Emperor, and Mr. Elston became a Russian noble, under the title of Count Soumarokoff-Elston. Either the son or grandson of the ex-Scotsman, young Count Soumarokoff-Elston, met romantically, and fell in love with, Princess Yousoupoff, probably the richest heiress in Russia. They were engaged, and the young Princess, the last of her race, in her turn applied to the then Emperor, who yielded his consent, and on their marriage the Count became, in addition, Prince Yousoupoff. The young man who recently lost his life is a grandson or great-grandson of Mr. Elston.

It is very flattering to us as a race that in most wealthy or princely Russian families you will find the person in charge of the children is generally an Englishman or Englishwoman. I was talking some years ago to an aide-de-camp of the late Grand Duke



Serge. He began in French, as usual, then drifted off into Russian, and finally broke into English. He hesitated occasionally for a word, but had absolutely no foreign accent. I asked him how long he had been in England, and he said he had never been there, but had had an English governess. Till he was ten, he said, he had never spoken any language but English, and only started learning Russian when he went to school. The Russians have a great reputation for being such excellent linguists, but I fancy the real reason of their success is that they start their children at the foreign languages from their infancy. You hear little Russian children speaking a medley of Russian, English, French, and German, and you generally find the accent in each language is good.

Certainly the results obtained are more beneficial and practical than the usual result of our English method of stuffing the children with the grammar of the language, with no colloquial practice. When I left school I had quite a good knowledge of French grammar, and knew the irregular verbs, etc., excellently; but I could not say the simplest sentence, and when I had to travel in France was simply stranded unless I found someone who spoke English. Another advantage of the Russian

system is that the children naturally do not suffer from that bane of most English people learning a foreign language—shyness, a terror of making mistakes, and so being ridiculous.

I am often asked, Are the Russians friendly to us as a race? This is rather a hard question to answer. I should say now that the middle classes in Russia are most friendly towards us. They have a wonderful respect for our institutions and our civilization, also they are brought up on our literature. Every Russian boy knows his Dickens, probably better than the average English boy. The English boy has an enormous selection to choose from, and is likely to vote Dickens old-fashioned, but he is loved in Russia. You will find three grades of translations of Dickens—a very simple eliminated edition, for very young children, a somewhat more advanced one, and the full translation. I have never met a Russian child who did not know ‘Our Mutual Friend,’ ‘Nicholas Nickleby,’ etc. The same may be said of Shakespeare. The children learn the plays at school, and they constantly see them at the theatre. Russian theatres are very fond of giving Shakespeare’s plays, and the theatre is looked on as quite one of the factors in a child’s education.

I think the peasantry and lower classes are also getting more friendly disposed towards us. In the school histories and in military circles *Albion perfide* was writ large as the national enemy, and such a feeling naturally lasts long; but the country is so full of all imaginable pamphlets and books about British institutions, that I think the old prejudices are very largely being dispelled, and a closer and more friendly attitude is taking its place. It is very flattering that whenever freedom in its many forms is discussed, it is generally our British institutions that are taken as models. The lower orders are passing through a stage now when the cry is all for Liberality and Liberal reforms. Most of the pamphlets hold up British institutions as the model of liberality, and so it is not strange that the readers of these works are beginning to think that, if Britain is the champion of Liberal institutions, we cannot be quite so black all round as we have been painted in various popular Russian histories. I know commercial travellers tell me they already notice the difference. The peasants want 'English goods,' because the 'English are our friends.' This is very vague, but, still, it is a very favourable symptom, and one which we can only hope may increase more and more.



AN OPEN-AIR KITCHEN



Some years ago I was talking to a very great Russian lady, and the talk ultimately drifted round to Russian internal politics in general, and to the question of Liberal reforms in particular. The lady in question said: 'If you want my opinion, it is that you foreigners are ruining Russia. You know nothing about the people or the country, and yet you are trying to graft on to us Western institutions, which are totally unsuited, and foreign to the Russian tradition and character. If we nobles could have our will, we would build a Chinese wall round Russia, and would kick out every foreigner, and first of all you British; then Russia would become a country worth living in again.' That patriotic Russians, and especially those connected with the Services, should not love us as a race seems to me to be perfectly comprehensible. Russia is a vast Empire, and naturally wants to get to the open sea. Whenever they were attempting to secure an outlet on to open water, there invariably appeared a Britisher, waving a flag, wanting to know where Russia was going to, and pointing out that she had no right to go there. Since Russia became a monarchy and then an empire, the monarchs naturally had to look round for some class of the population whom they could depend on



to support the throne. The class they selected was the nobility, which in Russia includes the landed gentry. To secure the support of this class, naturally legislation was introduced which favoured them. Now, when the demand for more democratic legislation is the vogue, naturally the generality of the nobility and landed gentry are up in arms, for what is given to the plebs is really taken from them. In every old country it has been the same—except, possibly, in Japan—and the favoured upper classes were opposed to the introduction of democratic legislation. As the name of England is so synonymous with that of democracy, naturally the plebs in Russia look to England as the champion of their cause, and, equally naturally, a large party of the patricians look on England as the cause of the upheaval which is slowly robbing them of many of their cherished privileges. Some years ago I helped to translate, for one of our Service journals, a book by a Russian officer of the General Staff, entitled, as far as I remember, ‘Our Future Campaign against India.’ The writer brought up the work to where, finally, the Russians conquered the Punjab. Here he ceased, and added a chapter of conclusions. The gist of his conclusions was that, given, as he had all through taken, the



most favourable conditions, Russia might possibly conquer India, but that to hold the country was a very different thing. So long as England had the command of the seas, a descent might take place anywhere; and also England, having a deep purse, might always purchase the tribes and perpetually cut the Russian line of communications. He also, knowing what he was writing about, said that India was too poor a country to be held by that expensive organ the sword, and must be governed by the cheaper pen, but it was those very educated classes in which Russia was short-handed. The final conclusion was that the policy for Russia to pursue was, not to actually invade India, but to hold a sword of Damocles always hanging over India, and hence to put the Indian Government to such expense that it would be found cheaper to come to terms. England has the fleet and the purse, and Russia has a vast army: let the two combine, and not only would they rule Asia, but they would dominate the whole world. This same sentiment has been talked over with me by Russians of all shades of political opinion and of all professions. They may not love England, but they respect her, and would far sooner have her as a friend than as an enemy. Many and many a Russian has said

to me: 'If I were not a Russian, I would like to be an Englishman.'

Taking all this together, I think that by far the greater part of the thinking Russian public is most friendly disposed towards England, and I hope and think that this friendly disposition will probably increase.

As regards the officers of the Russian Army, I may safely say—and I think every British officer who has been in Russia will agree with me—that, as a body, they are very good fellows. I well remember my arrival in Russia. I could only speak a few words of Russian, and was vainly attempting to make a Polish waiter at Warsaw understand me and get me something to eat. A Russian officer close by came up, saluted, and said in French: 'Can I be of any assistance?' I gladly availed myself of his aid. We got into conversation. He learned that I also was an officer, and he took me under his wing and looked after me all the way to Smolensk, where he left the train.

This spirit of camaraderie in arms is very strong in the Russian Army. A friend of mine, also an officer, came out to Russia for a few weeks, and was very anxious to see over some Russian barracks. I suggested he should call on the Adjutant of one

of the regiments. He did so, and the Adjutant said he would consult the Colonel and let him know. In a day or two he received a very polite note from the Colonel, asking him to come on such and such a day. He went, and found the whole battalion had been turned out for him—one company in review kit, another in marching kit; another had their kits laid out, etc. After having been shown everything in and out of barracks, he was carried off as the guest of the battalion to the officers' club—which corresponds to our officers' mess—where a splendid lunch was awaiting them. Champagne flew and speeches were made. My friend was merely a subaltern in an Indian regiment, and was perfectly astonished at this mark of good comradeship. Many other officers of our army could bear testimony to the friendliness of the Russian officer in his own country.

I have spoken with many Russian officers who have been in England, and they all spoke in the pleasantest way of their experiences in that country. The late General Danieloff, who for so many years was the chief of the Moscow troops, was an old veteran of the Crimean War, and distinguished himself in the defence of Sevastopol. When peace was signed, he told me, he and a brother-officer went

over to England on a trip of some weeks. Neither of them spoke a word of English, only some French. However, the old General assured me that they had a splendid time—met and dined with some of the regiments against whom, but a few weeks before, they had been fighting, and came away with the happiest recollections of *nos bons camarades de l'armée anglaise*. Since then I have met many a Russian officer who has been in England, and they all highly appreciated their stay.

There was a Russian I knew well and met often—a schoolmaster. He and I were always quarrelling, for he professed to be and was a pronounced Anglophobe. At last I persuaded him to learn a little English, and go over to England for a few weeks, to see if we really were as bad as he thought. When he came back he was converted into a violent Anglomaniac. I asked him what had converted him, and he said, 'Your British Museum.' He said that only the greatest nation on earth could have such a marvellous institution as that; he always felt as if he were in church when he was there, and always held his hat in his hand all the time he was in the building. I am afraid the British Museum does not have the same effect on the average Englishman.

## CHAPTER XXII

### LIFE IN MOSCOW

IN a previous chapter the two main causes have been alluded to which converted the gorgeous and aristocratic Moscow of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries into the Moscow of to-day, the city of merchants, which centres in itself the trade of Siberia, Central Asia, the Caucasus, and the Volga districts.

The first great blow has been shown to be when Peter the Great removed the Imperial residence and the seat of government to his new capital, St. Petersburg, and the final cause was Napoleon's invasion and the burning of Moscow. Few of the old nobility who had stayed on in Moscow returned there and rebuilt their old houses; they nearly all moved to Petersburg.

In ancient Moscow there were only two classes—the nobility, which included the landed gentry, and the peasants. In the course of time came the burghers, who were merchants of the various guilds, and ultimately from the burghers and the peasants

mainly came the so-called middle classes—the professional men. Of late years, in addition to these we have the manufacturing classes—the Moscow cotton, linen, and woollen kings, who almost form a separate class.

Catherine the Great issued an edict that, whereas the only fuel in Moscow was wood, and whereas, if any factories were started in Moscow, they would consume large quantities of wood, ‘which would cause the price of fuel to rise, to the hurt and detriment of our faithful and well-beloved lieges in our first capital Moscow, therefore we, Catherine, etc., do order and enjoin that no factories be permitted to be constructed in Moscow.’ This alone shows how recent is the rise of Moscow as a great manufacturing centre.

At the present day Moscow is the greatest spinning and weaving centre in Russia, and it is very gratifying to know that the industry was mainly started by Englishmen, and that to the present day nearly all the mill machinery comes from the United Kingdom. The result of the old aristocracy clearing out was that a new aristocracy was formed to take its place. This was a varied one. There were the official classes, who had their own aristocracy, and who mainly keep to them-







A MIDDLE-CLASS FUNERAL

selves, and the few old aristocrats who preferred remaining on to moving to Petersburg. There was the aristocracy of the professional and educated classes, grouped round the University, for, as has already been said, no one can become a lawyer or a doctor unless he has passed through a University. And there has also arisen an aristocracy of wealth, from the merchant and manufacturing classes, which were originally distinct from each other, but are now naturally very closely united. The official classes would apparently nearly all prefer to be in Petersburg, and hope ultimately to get there. They were educated in the Corps of Pages, were formerly in Guard regiments, etc., and can hardly be looked on as real Muscovites. The professional classes are, as a rule, well educated, and it is they who so largely are the leaders of the great wave of feeling for reform and Liberalism which has been so prominent in Russia for the last few years. The professional classes, as a rule, are not wealthy. The teachers, as a rule, receive very small salaries, and the doctors small fees. Professional etiquette forbids a Russian doctor to name his fee or to send in a bill. The doctors themselves think it is a nuisance; they lose heavily on it, as, unfortunately, they know for certain that a very

fair proportion of their patients will never pay, or will pay absolutely out of all proportion to the trouble and expense of the doctors. For the patient also this custom is a horrid nuisance: he wants to settle up fairly with his doctor, but how can he judge what the latter's work is worth? It is to be hoped that the doctors will drop that item of professional etiquette, and send in their bills the same as all other professional men.

The working day in Moscow is a long one; it usually commences at about 9 a.m., and only finishes about 7 p.m., when the shops close. The average Russian commences the day with merely a cup of tea and part of a roll of bread, or a biscuit, then off he hurries to his office, school, hospital, etc. Work goes on till about noon; hence from 12 to 1 is the pretty nearly universal luncheon hour. Till noon the restaurants are empty, but from 12 to 1.30 you will generally find it hard to secure a table. The usual thing at a restaurant is that you have a choice of two 'plats' and a cup of coffee for a rouble, which is about two shillings and a penny. Two shillings and a penny contain 100 farthings; in the rouble there are 100 copecks; hence, the simplest way of reckoning is to take a copeck as a farthing. In the better-class restaurants, as a rule,

the waiters are clad in white—loose white linen trousers, a linen blouse halfway down to the knees, caught in by a twisted belt of silk at the waist. This costume looks cool and clean, and is certainly an improvement on the very shabby dress-suit and tumbled shirt-front that one so often sees.

Lunch over, the restaurants are empty till about 5 or 6 o'clock, when the dinner-hours commence. Most Russians dine as soon as they get back home after work. Dinner is usually taken at home, and is not so much as in England a meal to which one invites guests. If you are invited to a dinner in a Russian house, you will probably find that most of the men are in frock-coats, some in ordinary round morning coats, and but few in evening dress or a dinner-jacket. Of the ladies also some may be very *decolletées* and hung over with gorgeous jewellery, whereas others will be in perfectly plain, as we should consider them, dark morning gowns. In such matters go as you please is the rule. If, however, you are asked to a wedding, you would have to go in evening dress; and in many circles when you fly round on Easter Day and New Year's Day, paying calls, you also go in evening dress. Servants in Russia like Easter and Christmastide. Not only do

they always receive handsome presents from their employers, but everybody who calls is also expected to tip, and tip well. When the Grand Duke Serge used to have his Easter and New Year levées, the hall-porter—that gorgeous functionary in scarlet and gold who stood near the door—took, as a rule, from 400 to 500 roubles each levée in tips. Russia is an awful country for tips—you tip for everything. When you call at a house, one servant takes your hat, one your goloshes, another your coat. In winter you naturally take off your outer garments, otherwise you would bring in such a current of icy air with you, and in summer it is generally customary to carry, even if you do not wear it, a light coat, as the ups and downs of the thermometer are so great that it is a useful precaution. Well, when you leave the house there are all the servants lined up, with your hat, etc., and if you don't tip at each visit, or at all events very regularly, you will find that you receive scant attention. The servants, as a rule, receive very small wages, as it is expected they will receive a certain amount in tips. I have known my own servant to have taken well over a pound in tips when a few friends came round.

After dinner, the average Russian being essentially





THE IMPERIAL OPERA HOUSE AFTER A GALA PERFORMANCE





a sociable person, either he goes to the theatre and ends up with a supper in a restaurant, or to see friends, or friends come to him. The theatres usually close from 11 to 11.30, and if you go on to a restaurant for supper, which is the usual thing, you probably will not get away till past 1 o'clock. If you feel festively inclined then, you can take a fast trotter and go to one of the music-halls in the park, where the variety shows go on till 3 or 3.30. You can also have another supper there, and a very excellent one. However, the prices are very high. The average Englishman would rather stare at paying from twenty-five to thirty shillings for each bottle of champagne, and two shillings odd for each minute glass of liqueur. However, you have only to look round you to see that the Russian regards that as the usual thing. The theatres in Moscow are excellent, the acting in one or two being really superb. The operas also are good. The Imperial Opera-House is, I believe, next to Scala, the largest in the world, and the chorus is excellent, as also the orchestra. Every employé in the opera is a Government employé, and qualifies for a Government pension—the same in the Imperial Dramatic theatre. The actors and singers are part of the national system of education, and as Government

employés have a fair social standing, which backs up their colleagues in the private theatres and operas. The Imperial Opera and Dramatic theatres at Moscow are very well run, the acting of the troupe of the latter being very good. The expenses of the opera considerably exceed the receipts, the deficit—which, I am told, is from one to two million roubles annually—being paid by the State. The audience is a very mixed one. In any box you will see some of the ladies in full evening dress, ablaze with diamonds, and the others in the simplest of morning dresses. In a word, you can go dressed as you please to the opera or theatre, except at a performance, when evening dress is *de rigueur*.

The Moscow audiences are very attentive and very enthusiastic. They were so well trained by Rubinstein that Moscow is decidedly a musical centre, and the audiences at opera or concert really know what good music is, and thoroughly appreciate it. Of all the prominent pianists, I should say Josef Hofmann is probably, and has been for years, the Moscow favourite. To attend one of his crowded concerts in Moscow shows how the audience appreciate good music. Though there may be thousands in the big hall, you could hear a pin drop till the last note dies away, when the

applause is deafening. Another great favourite is Arthur Nikisch, who comes to Moscow annually for some few concerts.

One of the main defects of Moscow, from the average Englishman's point of view, is the want of sports. In winter you certainly have the skating-rinks, but they are small and very crowded, and on most of them the ice is not kept well. There are a few ice-hills, but ice-hilling is apt to pall if one has to wait very long before one's turn for a run comes round again. The country round Moscow is also so level that one has to go some way out by train if ski-ing is wanted. However, Moscow is really better off for out-of-door sports in winter than at any other time of the year, as there is also a snooker curling-club.

In the spring and autumn a few enthusiasts, nearly all foreigners and mainly British subjects, play a few games of football; but the game has not caught on really yet, though more interest is taken in it than used to be the case. In the summer in Moscow there is only the tennis-club and boating-club. The lawn-tennis-club is only a small one, with four courts. Originally started by Englishmen, it has now become international. The courts are very good, but there are too few of them, it being

almost impossible to procure land for such a purpose. I am glad to say that a British firm has come to the rescue, and offered a considerable plot of land. On the strength of this, a British Sports Club has been formed, with a membership of about 150. We have now three excellent tennis-courts of our own. Besides tennis, there is football, skating, hockey on the ice, and curling. As soon as funds permit it is hoped to also construct ice-hills.

The British Sports Club is doing excellent work in bringing the small colony into closer touch, and this work will be carried still farther by the British Club, which has been recently formed and will shortly open.

Both of these institutions are entirely British, and only British subjects can be members. Both ladies and gentlemen can become members of either club, and visitors can become temporary members on payment of a small subscription, and on being proposed and seconded in the usual way.

The boating-club has regattas and races, but it is rather out of the way, and not very many belong to it. Of course, in the summer, everybody who can clears out of Moscow and goes to the country. The *dācha*, or country-house, is a species of wooden chalet, usually not beautiful to look at.



A SLEIGH WITH BLUE SILK NET TO PREVENT THE SNOW FROM SPRAYING THE OCCUPANTS

The Kremlin in the background



If the weather is hot, as the *dāchas* have iron roofs, it is generally insufferably hot; and if it is cold, as but too few of them are built in anything but the flimsiest way, and most of them are very inadequately, if at all, provided with stoves, one sits and shivers. However, in spite of these disadvantages most people, especially those who have children, always try to get out into the country for the summer. At all events, you get pure air, peace, and immunity from the rabble, roar, and dirt, of Moscow. At the *dācha* resorts there is usually a restaurant of sorts, with a wooden theatre attached. There is generally a pond or lake or small river, where one can hire boats—as a rule, of most rough construction, built by the local carpenter, whose ideas of naval architecture are not quite up-to-date—and bathe. Bathing is a great feature in *dācha* life, and usually there is a bathing-house on the river or lake attached to each two or three *dāchas*. These are very simply constructed wooden shanties.

Beyond bathing and occasional performances at the theatre, amusements there are none. In very few *dācha* places will you find any tennis-court, or certainly one on which even a moderate player would care to play. Fishing is sometimes avail-



able, but it is always bottom-fishing, as the Russian fish do not seem to have been educated up to knowing what a fly is. The usual style of fishing is to hire a boat, and get rowed out to a suitable shady spot. There you put out, say ten rods and lines all round the boat, and you sit comfortably there and smoke interminable cigarettes. I have watched these fishermen for hours, but I have never once seen one of them catch anything, beyond a wretched sprat some two to three inches long. The other amusements are walks. These are usually large parties of friends or acquaintances, who walk, or rather stroll leisurely, along in the evening, always keeping up a general conversation, and going down to the station, where they promenade for hours up and down the platforms seeing the passengers arrive and depart.

Life at a *dācha* is not exciting as a rule, and generally is a most free-and-easy life. Any comfortable style of dress is tolerated, which is just as well, as often the heat is quite tropical. The ladies do not wear any hats out in the country, but merely use a parasol, and you meet people going down to, or coming up from, the river or bathing-spot in very casual attire. In a word, *dācha* life is very easy-going. Everyone has come out to make

the most of the air before being cooped up for several months in town in the winter ; hence, as far as possible, you live an alfresco life. You have all your meals in the garden or on the veranda, even when it is so cold that you all have to put on great-coats or wraps. Every holiday—and holidays are legion in Russia—all your friends who have to stay in town troop out to you to get a breath of fresh air, and you put as many as possible up for the night. They are not exacting, and a sofa, a blanket, and a cushion or pillow, is usually quite enough to entice a person to escape a stuffy night in town. Then early the next morning a bath, a hurried breakfast, and a rush for the train. As most of the men grow beards, they do not have to shave ; anyhow, there is nearly always a decent barber at all the railway-stations in town.

The great objections to life in town in the summer are the heat, the noise, and the smells. The houses are nearly all stuccoed and have tin roofs, so the upper stories are usually insufferably hot, and the glare on the streets is most trying. The roads are also, as a rule, very bad, and the rattle over the cobbles is such that you can hardly make yourself heard.

The way of making a road in Russia is simple.

You take out three to four inches of the surface earth. In the trench you lay a couple of inches of sand ; in the sand you stick upright cobble stones ; scatter some metal or gravel over them, then cover all with sand, go over it with a hand rammer, and your road is ready. Naturally the wind blows up clouds of dust and sand, and the loosely constructed roadway is soon cut up into holes and ruts by heavy traffic.

When it rains or the road is watered, the moisture collects into puddles in the hollows by the cobbles, and the muddy water is distributed freely over you as you walk by the passing fast-trotters, with their rubber tyres.

Certainly if anybody wishes to see Moscow the best time is the winter. The streets are quiet, as there is a foot or more of snow, and the sleighs travel over this noiselessly and smoothly, and you can hear yourself talk in comfort. The winter is also the season ; the operas and theatres are in full swing, whereas they are usually closed in the summer, as the troupes go touring in the provinces.

Since the Imperial Family and the capital were moved to Petersburg, the Muscovites have no longer that personal knowledge of the members



A TOBOGGAN SLIDE



of the Royal Family they formerly had. Also the Imperial Family lives much apart, and their doings are but little chronicled by the papers. However, people will freely give you all sorts of information concerning the various members of the Imperial Family, but as a rule their information is strongly biased by their political tendencies — you will hear totally conflicting opinions concerning one and the same member — and the few people who really know, and could speak authoritatively, are naturally those who speak least. ‘*Quot homines, tot sententiæ*’ is certainly true of the opinions one hears concerning the members of the Imperial Family, and where so little is really known this is not to be wondered at. However, nearly everybody is quite certain that he or she really possesses intimate knowledge of the members of the Imperial Family; and it is interesting to hear all the various accounts, though it is impossible to draw any conclusions, as the accounts are so totally dissimilar.





# PROVINCIAL RUSSIA

## CHAPTER XXIII

### CENTRAL RUSSIA

IT was in the south-west, in the basin of the Dniepr, the great waterway between Scandinavia and Constantinople, that the Russian State had its first beginnings. Kieff, and not Moscow, is the real 'mother-city.' But from the fourteenth century Russian history has centred round the 'white-stoned' town on the Moskva, and the principal part in the national development has been played by the Muscovites, or Great Russians. In numbers and importance these by far exceed the other two families of the Russian race, the White and the Little Russians. It was the Muscovite Princes that emancipated Russia from the Tartar yoke. It was the Great Russian stock that, possessing a remarkable instinct and aptitude for colonization, sent forth successive swarms of emigrants to the northern forests and the fertile

steppes in the south, and that alone of all Slavonic peoples have built up a powerful empire in face of very considerable difficulties. Their religion, their form of government, and their language, they have stamped on the whole nation. In the course of expansion they have absorbed a considerable number of Finnish peoples. While it would be a mistake to infer that the predominant characteristics of the Great Russians are anything but Slavonic, it seems probable that to this infusion of Finnish blood, and not altogether to the more rigorous Northern climate, are due certain modifications of the Slavonic type which are peculiar to them. They have lost in liveliness and gained in strength. They have more endurance and energy, more perseverance and patience, than the Little or White Russians. In physique they are less graceful, but more rigorous.

This prolific stock, endowed with inexhaustible reserves of strength and recuperative powers, has spread in every direction of the empire, adapting itself with peculiar readiness and success to new conditions, but at the same time preserving all the customs that could possibly be retained. Thus, the traveller in Russia will notice a certain sameness in peasant life from Archangel to Astrakhan,

the same village plan, the same type of houses, of clothes and manners, a sameness which is accentuated by the similarity of the scenery. But variations do arise under the influence of a novel environment, and Russian writers are careful to distinguish between the character of the central peasants and that of the people in the north and in the Urals. The original type is best seen in the central governments in the basin of the River Oka, which for long was a political and ethnological frontier.

This river, one of the great rivers of Europe, has its source in the Government of Oryol, and meets the Volga at Nijni. Its basin is intimately connected with Russian history, and comprises to-day the most populous and most highly developed district in the whole empire. Nowhere is the web of railways closer, nowhere are more people engaged in manufacturing industries. Yet even here the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants are peasant agriculturists. First, then, a word as to the appearance of the country, and this, the reader will remember, applies to rural scenery in Russia generally.

Sluggish rivers, with steep red banks, wind through broad plains. In the distance are dark

woods of pines or birches, which in the evenings resound with the notes of nightingales. The unfenced communal fields slope gently towards the horizon, and through them, also unfenced, runs the broad stoneless road with deep ruts. There is no strongly marked feature in the landscape. The predominant colour is in summer grey or brown. In spring it is bright, almost dazzling, green, and in winter practically unrelieved white. The feeling of space, of distance, which the people call their great enemy, impresses itself strongly on the mind; all round for a thousand miles is Russia. There are generally no separate homesteads—a feature that must, however, alter largely in no long time, owing to the agricultural reforms inaugurated by M. Stolypin's Government, that aim at establishing the individual and independent farmer, and hence project a revolution of a peaceful but most momentous nature. With the exception of bee-keepers, charcoal-burners, and foresters, whose occupations oblige them to dwell in the woods, the peasants all live in villages. Those whose strips of corn lie at the outskirts of the *mir* land, often ten or fifteen versts from their homes, will spend in harvest-time the nights in the open, and their little fires will twinkle over the fields.

Great Russian villages vary little from each other, except in size. Occasionally there are rows of trees relieving the monotony of the straight, regularly-built streets, and close by, surrounded by pleasant grounds, there may be a landowner's long one-storied wooden house, with the men's apartments at one end, the women's at the other, and the public rooms in the centre. But most villages are treeless, and, apart from the church, a merchant's stores, the Zemstvo or Local Government Board school, and sometimes a hospital, consist exclusively of the wooden *izbas* of the peasants. They are surrounded by a wattled fence, which lies far enough off to leave a pasture-ground for the cattle. Where the road meets this fence there is a rough wooden gate, with a small hut to shelter the old man who looks after its fastening. A little farther on there is a signpost giving the name of the village and the number of its 'souls,' or male inhabitants. High over the *izbas* rises the white church, with its cross and green cupolas. On the orthodox cross the slanting position of the lowest transverse bar is determined by the old Eastern tradition that Christ was lame. In the Greek religion Zeus took to himself the attributes of mental suffering, and identified him-

self, for example, with the suppliant. But the Russians in their broad humanitarianism have gone farther. They have not shrunk from making their God physically deformed, alone of Christian peoples following literally the words of Isaiah: 'For He hath neither form nor comeliness.' So at least a Slavophil might urge, but the notion would be present, if at all, only very dimly in the average Russian mind. Close by the church stands the high belfry. The bells are rung from a little platform near its summit, and generally have a pleasant note. On still summer evenings their pealing tones echo musically far over the fields and woods.

The broad street is merely a continuation of the road, and is equally full of ruts and pits and unexpected chasms. There may be the framework of an *izba* made of round logs caulked with moss and resin set there for seasoning; and there are sure to be some sturdy little black pigs scampering about in search of garbage, crowds of fair-haired children playing on grass patches before the houses, and women gossiping at the wells. These are marked by a succession of long poles, which the Russians call 'cranes.' There are two poles to each well. One of them stands upright, and the middle



of the other is let into a catch at its top. To one end of this movable pole is attached the rope with the bucket, and to obtain water the other end is pulled down with a second rope. There are long troughs by the wells for watering horses. The peasants do not scruple, however, to use the muddy river water even for culinary or drinking purposes. In general the Great Russian villages are not picturesque. But when they are tree-shaded, and one looks at them in soft evening light from over a wide river or pond, they are steeped in a quiet melancholy beauty of their own. Under the high white church, glowing like silver, cluster the huts, with their roofs of thatch or green iron. Cattle, sheep, and geese, string out over the meadows, of their own accord returning home from pasture. Choir songs, sung by young peasants, float over the water. Then later the stillness is broken only by the sharp rattle of the small wooden clacker with which an old man goes round during the night alarming ne'er-do-wells by his presence.

The huts are generally built end on to the street, and the projecting beams and overhanging gables are often carved with intricate ornamentation. Through the roof, usually in the middle of the side, projects a brick chimney. In winter the huts



are banked with earth and straw halfway up the small windows. The house stands at one of the corners of a rectangle occupied by the homestead. Somewhere on the street line is a double gate of wood, a large one for carts and a small one for people. The rest of this line is a high wooden fence. Round the other lines range the outhouses, byres, and sheds, and in the middle is the open *dvor*, or court. In it stands a long pole, with a little box at the top for starlings. From this court, and not from the street, the house is generally entered. You go up one or two steps to a porch or small veranda where in summer many of the richer peasants spend their spare time drinking tea. Then you enter a small vestibule called the *sieni*, which is the theme of a famous song. A door from this, again, leads into the dwelling-room, frequently the only room of the *izba*, though above there may be a garret for storing grain and various odds and ends. Generally this room is about fifteen feet by thirteen feet. In the corner is a great stove of clay or whitewashed brick, which is about five feet in length and four feet in breadth, and thus occupies a large proportion of the space. Its door is about a foot above the wooden floor, and in winter, when the wood inside has been



A TURCOMAN AND HIS WIFE



reduced to red embers, it is shut tight, and the chimney closed so that nothing of the heat may be lost. In winter, too, the snuggest sleeping-place is on its flat top. From it to the corner, diagonally opposite the door, stretches a broad bench which in cold weather is also used as sleeping-quarters. In summer most of the peasants sleep in the outhouses. There are windows on two sides of the room, looking towards the street and into the court. The furniture consists of at least a wooden table and chairs, and a cupboard or two. In the most prominent corner, on a small triangular shelf nearer the ceiling than the floor, are set one or more *ikons*, pictorial half-lengths of Christ, the Mother, and the Saints. The little lamp in front of them is lit on festival days. To them the peasant bows, crossing himself and taking off his cap when he enters the room and after meals or on any solemn occasion. When he yawns, too, he crosses himself to prevent the Evil Spirit from entering his body. On the papered walls are highly coloured lithographs of the late war, of the rewards and punishments in the next world, and photographs of the family, especially soldier sons, the Tsar and his children, and absolutely unknown generals, across whom, heedless of human

dignity, crawl long files of harmless red *taracans*. In the richer houses one will find clocks in glass cases, superior furniture, and a collection of books, which will include 'Lives of the Saints,' cheap editions of Pushkin, Gogol, and Tolstoy, with very probably a translation of 'The Pilgrim's Progress.' The *izbas* of the present day show little improvement over those of the time of Peter the Great. They are as a rule draughty, insanitary, and insect-ridden, and it is not an unmixed evil that every six or seven years they are burnt down accidentally in a village fire or through private enmity, for the satisfaction of which 'letting loose the red cock' is not an uncommon expedient.

Within recent years the fine physical type of the Great Russian has somewhat deteriorated through insufficient nourishment. He is a tall, well-built man with a singularly dignified face, broad brow and nose, small eyes, white teeth, and flowing beard. His movements are grave, and yet capable of extreme vivacity. In speaking he uses lively gesticulations. The mass of light brown hair is parted in the middle, and shaved off behind at the nape of the neck, so that at the back it falls like a dense curtain, cut evenly above the tanned, wrinkled skin. The splendid white teeth, per-





NEW YEAR'S CUSTOM: CHOOSING A BRIDE



petually polished by the black rye bread, which is the staple food, are not so characteristic of the younger generation. The usual headgear is a peaked blue yachting cap, but many wear their old soldier's cap or a round felt hat. A gaily-coloured, generally red, shirt fastened at the side of the neck falls over darkish print trousers, and is girdled by a belt at the waist. On the feet are worn thick coarse socks, which, with the ends of the breeks, are hidden by strips of cloth wound round the legs like puttees. These are held in position by cords attached to the *lapti*, or bast shoes. But in summer the peasants in the fields go barefoot, and put on their footgear only before entering a village. On holidays the *lapti* are replaced by top-boots of leather. There is nothing distinctive about the dress of the women, who are not so good-looking as the men. Young girls either go bareheaded or wear a kerchief over the tresses that fall down the back. But for matrons the kerchief is indispensable. The fashion of tying it varies in different districts, and the colours are as the colours of the rainbow. In winter both sexes wear sheepskins, or *tulups*, and great felt boots which reach over the knee, and are kept on at night as well as during the day. Driving in winter, the peasant wears above the

*tulup* a heavy loose-fitting greatcoat with a collar of fur or sheepskin. Then, to tie the belt tightly over this multitudinous mass of garments, a friend rests his foot on the other's waist, and tugs both ends of the belt with all his might. Clothes and hair are not free from insects, but the universal custom of taking a vapour bath every Saturday is conducive alike to bodily cleanliness and to longevity.

Like much of the country itself, the Russian peasants are still undeveloped, but infinitely rich in possibilities. Sentimental and sensational writers have been so successful in blurring the real outlines that in England the term *monjik* too often seems to connote at once the darkest and deepest degradation and the victim of a crushing tyranny. The facts are otherwise. On the one hand, the Russian authorities are not so black as they are often painted, and the taxes are comparatively light. The land belongs to the peasants themselves, and in village matters their *mirs*, or councils, enjoy almost unique powers of local government of an extremely democratic type. Secondly, as to the peasant character, the defects have been so accentuated as to overshadow the whole picture. So far from the peasants being, as some writers

seem to imagine, in a continual beatific condition of intoxication—like Stevenson's gipsies, 'always drunk, simply and truthfully always'—only very rarely in rural districts does one meet those constant toppers whom the Russian calls 'bitter drunkards.' The average spent on drink per head is considerably less than in England or Scotland, even allowing for the fact that Russia is a poorer country, and also, despite those conditions of climate, strangely ignored by temperance reformers, which make for heavier drinking in Northern than in warmer climes. Equally indiscriminating is the charge of idleness. When the peasants are idle, it is almost entirely through force of these same climatic conditions, during the long winter when wood has once been carted and the homestead repaired, and when the fields lie feet deep under the snow. But in spring and harvesting they work all day, and a large part of the night as well, with an energy and vigour that remind one of the moujik Gerasim in 'Turguenieff's powerful and pathetic story 'Mumu,' who, 'when he laid his enormous hands on the plough handle, seemed by his own strength without the help of his horse to cut into the stubborn breast of the earth; and in mowing wielded his sickle so mightily that a young

birch grove itself, one might fancy, he could at one stroke shear clean from its roots.' They do not, it is true, assign a high value to time, nor, like most other people, do they do more than they are obliged to do, but to level on these grounds a sweeping charge of idleness is less than fair. Perhaps the most telling indictment is on the score of dishonesty. 'Everybody steals,' says one of their own proverbs, with a delightful mixture of candour and blasphemy, 'except Christ—and He would if His hands were not nailed to the Cross.' But it is essential to note a contrast between the peasant's relations on this point towards his fellows on the one hand, and the State and neighbouring landowner on the other. While in the latter case he finds it difficult to distinguish between what is his and not his, and will appropriate, not merely wood from the forests, but even mugs and clothing from the hospital to which he owes restored health or life itself, he will be much less ready to 'convey' from those whom he calls 'our brother.' This difference may be connected with a disguised but indisputable and deep-rooted hostility towards the upper classes, which is, indeed, the inevitable result of historical causes, and which meets well-intentioned measures of the present day with undue suspicion. With regard to



A CONVENT IN NOVGOROD : NUNS MAKING HAY





other defects, though it is notoriously difficult to make with certainty generalizations on national character, few would dispute that the peasants are as a rule improvident, untruthful, and obstinate in persevering in error; that they lack resolution, independence, and initiative; that they possess an insatiate capacity for receiving, while their gratitude is not commensurate.

Against these failings must be set unquestioned virtues: sober-mindedness, endurance, practical shrewdness, and a broad tolerance that forms the opposite pole to the spirit which makes Spanish peasants of neighbouring villages stone one another's Madonnas. They are hospitable and kindly, though not to animals. As for human beings, a proverb inculcates, indeed, the precept, 'Beat your wife like your fur'; but the principle is not carried beyond the reasonable limits of corrective castigation permitted to or usurped by the male the whole world over, and in the very same aphorism it is followed by the saving clause, 'and love her like your soul.' Nowhere have children a better time than in Russia. The peasant temperament is pacific, though liable when worked upon to fall into sudden short bursts of blind, elemental passion. Finally, this people is highly gifted intellectually,



and in this respect resembles far more nearly active-minded Scottish crofters than the heavy-witted agricultural labourers of the Midland shires. Russia possesses an admirable educational system, and though compulsory instruction is not yet established, and girls' education still too much neglected, the military statistics alone show an ever-widening area of intellectual enlightenment. In political matters they manifest as yet little interest except in the land question.

In a famous letter to Gogol, the great literary critic and 'intelligent,' Bielinski wrote: 'Look more carefully, and you will see that the peasants are by nature profoundly atheistic. They have still much superstition, but not a trace of religious feeling. . . . Mystical exaltation is foreign to their nature; for that their minds are too clear and positive, too well endowed with common-sense, and it is this point, perhaps, that decides the enormous historical rôle that they will play in the future.' This opinion, however, was biassed by *a priori* prejudices, and the Slavophil writers, such as the poet Tutcheff, the novelist Dostoyevski, and the philosopher Solovioff, are on the whole nearer the truth. They have insisted on the all but unique spiritual qualities of the people, on the measure of their faith,



PEASANTS



resignation, and charity, and on this basis, indeed, have written eloquently on Russia's Messianic mission to Western Europe. Thus, for example, Aksakoff gives what is, perhaps, the finest picture of childhood in the world's literature, when he describes a famine-stricken village through which he and his father passed. 'A sullen-looking peasant said in a rough voice to my father: "It is no joy to work, Aleksai Stepanitch. I would not look at such a field: but weeds and thistles! A whole day you go over three acres and gather a fistful!" My father answered: "What can be done? It is the will of God;" and the sullen-looking reaper replied friendly: "Of course it is, little father."' Aksakoff makes one of his rare digressions to comment: 'Later I understood the lofty meaning of these simple words that calm all agitation and silence all human protesting murmur, and by whose nourishing strength Orthodox Russia lives till this day.' And one cannot talk long with peasants before being struck by this religious note. With their gift for terse, vigorous, and picturesque language, they constantly startle one by those winged phrases, so rare in English conversation, which vibrate with penetrating insight, truth, and simplicity. But how far these indisputable spiritual qualities are due to the

Christian religion, and how far to Oriental fatalism and mere native character moulded by past history, it is difficult to say. It is easier to note that they have contributed to retarding material progress, and that in the more advanced districts they are less obvious. There can be no doubt, however, that if faith, resignation, and charity, constitute religion, the Russian peasants as a whole are profoundly religious. It is absurd to limit their religion to idolatrous worship of the *ikon*. It is generally admitted to be largely tinged with mysticism. Mr. Baring, it should be noted, writing with his usual brilliance, but with somewhat less, perhaps, than his usual insight, finds its principal feature in a 'glorious sensibleness.' This is certainly characteristic of the peasants' attitude towards the priest, but the part played by the priest in the religious life—in the broader sense as distinguished from State or Church ordinances—is so small that it is questionable whether terms true of this relation may be applied with propriety to the relation towards God and the *ikons*. It may be observed, finally, that when a peasant is both religious and thoughtful he is inclined to become dissatisfied with the Orthodox Church, and join an evangelical or mystical sect.

Turguenieff, in one of his poems in prose, pictures

the Sphinx brooding over sandy deserts, with a mysterious gaze, the riddle of which Œdipus alone could solve. Then, as he scans those features and that glance, it flashes across him that they are things which he knows. 'The white low forehead, the prominent cheek-bones, the short straight nose, the finely-chiselled mouth with its white teeth, the soft moustache and curly beard, the small eyes set wide apart, and the shock of parted hair on the head—why, that is you, Carp, Sidor, Simyon peasant of Yaroslavl, of Ryazan, my fellow countryman, little bone of Russia! Pray, when did you become a Sphinx?' And he concludes by saying that hardly will an Œdipus be found for the Russian Sphinx. It is indeed certain that the peasantry present extraordinary and all but bewildering contrasts, but to ponder Œdipus-like over the meaning of the glance in their 'colourless but deep eyes' is, in the case of a profoundly tender-hearted poet, little likely to yield results of practical value. This passage of Turguenieff is as poignant but as unreal as Ruskin's description of the Swiss mountain-dwellers. Of the good and bad points in the peasant character, both of which have been profoundly influenced by historical conditions, the latter are largely the temporary result of ignorance and isolation, and will be

obliterated, or at least largely modified, by ameliorated surroundings ; while the former appear to lie deeper and be less liable to suffer by the change. Since the emancipation the peasants have made immense progress. And now the rate of improvement can only accelerate with the influence of education, the breaking up of the commune, which was a heavy drag on rural enterprise, the political franchise, and the increased facilities offered by the spread of railways for disposing of surplus crops and developing the internal resources of the country. A great future assuredly lies before this remarkable people, with its physical and mental powers, its vigour, elasticity, and youth. This may be a question of time, but it can scarcely be a matter for doubt.





SIBERIAN CONVICT



## CHAPTER XXIV

### THE NORTH

THE North of Russia, the sparsely-inhabited Governments of Archangel and Olonets, is a land of illimitable forests, wastes of moor and tundra, mighty lakes and broad rivers, some deep, reedy, and sluggish, others rushing clear and cascade-broken. To get to Archangel, one travels from Moscow by rail or by ship down the Dvina, or one can sail from Petersburg up the Neva, through the stupendous inland seas of Ladoga and Onega, and then by boats down the Vyg to the Gulf of Onega, where, again, larger vessels ply round the coast towns. Finally, it may be reached by the Arctic Ocean and Barents Sea. By this last route, on August 24, 1553, came the English sailor Richard Chancellor, on his mission to find a Northern maritime route to China and India. With a letter from Edward VI. he went to Ivan the Terrible, who received him with the utmost kindness, and granted valuable concessions and

commercial privileges. To exploit these an English colony was founded fifty miles up the Dvina, at a village Kholmogory. Archangel was built thirty-one years later, and in the seventeenth century all the Russian trade with England left its wharves. But its brief period of prosperity passed with the foundation of Petersburg. There remain still, however, an English consulate and church, and a considerable colony, employed chiefly in great saw-mills in the neighbourhood, where the men employ an Anglo-Russian jargon. The town stretches for four miles along the right bank of the Dvina, over thirty miles from its mouth. The harbour is free from ice from the first days of May to the first days of October. Owing to the Gulf Stream the ice here melts sooner than in the more southerly Onega Gulf. So, too, when there is a northerly breeze sea-bathing is appreciably warmer than when the wind is from the south. From May to October the port is full of ships engaged in corn and timber traffic, for the Dvina, which is connected by a portage with the Petchora, is a commercial outlet for an enormous tract of country. The level of education in the town is high, but the place itself is dull. It has a museum, a cathedral, and an unworthy statue of the great



THE TRANS-SIBERIAN RAILWAY



writer and scientist Lomonosoff, who was born in 1711, in a fisherman's cottage near Kholmogory, and who set out on his first momentous visit to Moscow on foot with three borrowed roubles and a load of fish.

There are no other towns of any size in Northern Russia, but at a distance of fourteen hours' sailing from Archangel is the famous and enormously wealthy Solovetski monastery. It is situated on a fairly large wooded island in the Gulf of Onega, dotted with natural and artificial lakes. One of the latter lies under the high turreted wall to the east, while the western wall is washed by the sea. The place is full of the cries of sea-birds and the sound of waves. Every summer fifteen thousand pilgrims visit it, and often as many as a thousand are fed together in the refectory. Founded in 1429, the monastery was greatly enlarged during the years of commercial activity in the north. It has twice been bombarded, once successfully by the English fleet during the Crimean campaign. The other occasion was much earlier, when the monks, passionately devoted to the ancient usages, rejected Nikon's ecclesiastical reforms, and defied for eight years the forces of the Tsar.

These same reforms filled the northern forests



and the Vyg Valley with Raskolnik, or sectarian, fugitives, to whom the very errors of Holy Writ were sacred and inviolable. Their numbers increased when Peter the Great trampled contemptuously and deliberately on the old Muscovite customs, forbidding long beards and long robes, surrounding himself with foreigners, and toiling with his own imperial hands at the boatman's oar and the executioner's axe. The conviction spread that Peter was Antichrist. Harassed and persecuted by the Tsar's soldiery, the malcontents plunged ever deeper into these impenetrable marshes and forests. The more reasonable settled in peace by the shores of the White Sea, and the wilder orgiastic sects burned themselves in thousands. Of these wild martyrdoms, Merejhovski has painted a remarkable picture in his 'Peter and Alexis,' admirably translated by Mr. Trench. Religious fanaticism is not yet dead in Russia, but it will rarely be seen by a foreigner. Pilgrims, however, he will see everywhere, and near Archangel in the summer the roads are full of them, bound for Solovetski, some of them sensible and sane peasants or from higher classes fulfilling a vow, many of them rascals and vagabonds, many homeless, half-crazed wanderers that journey rest-

lessly from one great shrine to another. Toward these unbalanced naturals that are known as 'God's people,' the peasantry show extreme kindness and not a little reverence. Turguenieff's little sketch of their ravings is thoroughly typical. A traveller takes refuge in a wayside inn from heavy rain, and suddenly hears through the partition a voice say: "God bless all in this house! God bless! God bless! Amen! Amen!" the voice repeated, prolonging the last syllable of each word in a wild, unnatural fashion. I heard a loud sigh and the sound of a heavy body sinking down on a bench.'

"Akulina"—this was a female with the pilgrim—"handmaiden of God, come here," the voice began again. "See, for as much as I am naked, for as much as I am blessed . . . Ha-ha-ha! T-phew! Lord, my God, Lord, my God, Lord, my God," the voice began to boom like a deacon's before the altar, "Lord, my God, Master of my belly, look on my affliction! Oho-ho! Ha-ha! . . . T-phew! And blessed be this house till the seventh hour!"

"Who is that?" I asked my hostess, who entered my room with a samovar.'

"And that, my little father," she said in a

hurried whisper, "is a holy man, a man of God. He is not long come to our country, and there, he is pleased to visit us. In such weather! It just runs from him, the little pigeon, in floods! And you should see the chains on him, what like they be—terrible!"

"God bless! God bless!" the voice started again. "A', Akulina, Akulinushka, friend! And where is our paradise—our beautiful paradise! . . . In the desert is our paradise . . . our paradise. . . . And this house at the beginning of the world—great happiness—oh-oh-oh!" The voice muttered something indistinctly; then after a long yawn there was another burst of hoarse laughter. This laughter broke out every time as if involuntarily, and every time was followed by angry expectoration.'

"Ech ma! The master's not here! There is our grief, then," the woman of the house sighed. "He'll say some saving word, and me a woman, it will not stay in my head!"

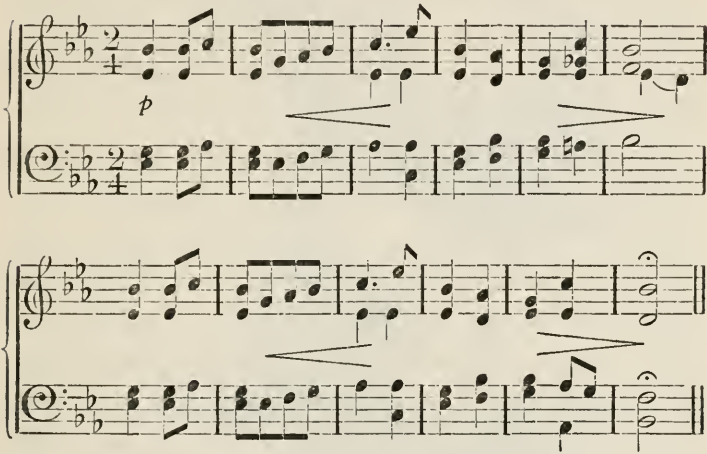
Several causes have contributed to make the northern peasant more energetic and independent—not for any *barin* will he doff his hat!—than the moujik of the centre. A large proportion of the population are sectarians, descendants of the

old Raskolniks, who are invariably more industrious, self-reliant, and provident, than the adherents of the Orthodox Church. They have, too, in their veins much of the dour, determined Finnish blood that gave rise to the proverb: 'Burn a Karelian, and after three years he's not in ashes!' Being on Government land, they escaped the demoralizing conditions that accompanied private serf-ownership. Something is also due here, as in Siberia, to the influence and propaganda of political exiles. Lastly, a great number of them are not so much agriculturists as trappers, hunters, and fishermen, a stalwart race inured to privations and dangers on flood and in forest. Several authorities see in these northern peasants the strongest branch of the Russian race. In manners they are simple, unsophisticated, and hospitable. In education they are backward, and this explains why there still linger with them dresses, customs, and songs, that have long vanished from Southern Muscovy. Some of the customs breathe an air of a sterner age. Thus, often in the marriage ceremonies the bride's hair is pulled, and a song sung: 'Under the mattress of the marriage bed is a stick of oak, to which is joined a whip of silk: the whip of silk has three ends, and when it scourges the blood

squirts.' Less savage in colour, but really as primitive, are the words of the bride when about to forfeit her 'divine freedom.' She kneels three times before the *ikons*, saying: 'I make the first bow for the most pious Tsar, I make the second bow for the most pious Tsaritsa, and the third I make for myself, young girl, that the Saviour may have pity on me in the strange house.' Among their neighbours the Lapps, however, 'the bride must shriek and struggle, and be hauled to her new home like a reindeer.' Here there were collected priceless old *bxilinis* that told of the heroes, the peasants' sons, Mikoula and Illya of Murom; and even now, while over great districts of Central Russia industrial life has introduced cheap costumes, cheap tunes, and trivial words, and to some degree justified the factory song, 'O works! O you works! You've demoralized the people,' in the northern villages linger marvellously beautiful home-worked dresses, and a wealth of old refrains, some of which in slow maestoso touch with almost unendurable pathos the lowest deeps of human sadness; while others, again, treat of rural customs with allegro motifs that reveal a strange new world of melody to Western ears. Typical of this latter kind is the haunting air of

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‘ A moui prosy sayali ’ ( ‘ We have sown the millet-seed ’ ), instinct with the very breath of spring and the smell of country fields :



All the rivers teem with fish, and the woods are infinitely more full of game than in Central Russia, or even the Urals. The coverts abound in woodcock, capercaillie, and tree-partridge, and blackcock perch boldly on village trees. In winter they line in long rows the rime-fringed branches of the birches, and from these as evening falls they fly some hundred yards and plunge headlong into the snow. The force of their impetus carries them deep down, and here they remain till next morning. In spring, before dawn they hold their *tocs*, when the male



birds vie with each other in flaunting and swaggering before the female. At such moments they are insensible to danger, and it must be confessed that too many Russians take an unsportsmanlike advantage of this opportunity. The forests are full, also, of foxes, wolves, and 'rugged Russian bears.' A *berlog*, or winter home of a bear, is easily marked after the first snowfall, for round it, before he settles for his long slumber, the bear makes a perfect labyrinth of tracks, *qua signa sequendi falleret indeprensus error*. Then later in the season the peasants sell it to a town sportsman, and if a bear is found at home they receive from £4 to £6. On being disturbed, the bear often shoots up like a cork out of a soda-water bottle, scattering a shower of powdery snow, and is shot while his eyes are still blinded by the light. Some keen sportsmen and peasants go bear-hunting armed with nothing but knives.

Wolves are hunted in several ways. One amusing way, a trifle more exciting than a similar ruse described by Herodotus for killing the hippopotamus, is to attract them at night by taking a pig in a sledge through the forest, and by pulling its tail and making it squeak. In summer or autumn they are hunted on horseback in the





CONVOY OF PRISONERS ON FOOT

*The Prisoner*



manner so graphically described in 'War and Peace,' with hounds trained to spring simultaneously one to the right and a second to the left of the animal's throat. Then a huntsman gallops up, springs from his horse on to the wolf's back, and plunges his knife in its heart. If the wolf manages to turn his head, the huntsman must expect a mauling. I have seen a heavy knife with a large piece of good Sheffield steel snapped off in just such a case by a wolf's powerful jaws. But the more common though less exhilarating method of hunting is followed in winter. When a pack settles in any place, the carcass of an old horse is left from time to time to keep them from straying elsewhere. Then one fine morning, having made sure that the wolves are there, the hunters sally out for their destruction. The beaters ring them in with fluttering red flags on ropes hung lightly on shrubs, or, if the ground be open, wound round poles set in the snow. These lines of red flags converge at one end, and here the guns stand dressed in white. They must not smoke or move or make a noise of any kind. In quiet, windless weather it is glorious to stand amid the perfect silence and watch the delicate tracery of the frost on the trees or the scintillating

snow. But all at once a storm of shouts, yells, and execrations, falls on one's ears from a distance. That is made by the beaters who have finished setting up the flags, and are starting to drive the wolves from the other end of the ring. It rouses one to a tense watch for a greyish-brown body moving heavily but rapidly through the snow, with head turned toward the terrifying red flags. In such a case, if a fox appears first, you let it pass; on the other hand, if a ring is made for a fox, and a wolf appears, you shoot. It is sometimes useful to know that a skilled beater can drive a wolf towards whatever gun he pleases.

Clear, calm days come often in the course of a Russian winter. It would be difficult to name a preference for any one of the Russian seasons—the winter; or the spring; or the summer, with its white nights in this northern country, and its dusty roads; or the autumn, with its shooting and fishing, with the forests turning gorgeously yellow, when first the nightingale, then the quail, and then the cornerake, cease crying. Many would declare for the spring, when the woods sound afresh with the long-silenced notes of birds; when the rivers are transformed from stagnant pools to brown masses of swirling water; when grass and bushes and trees



A BEAR-TRAP



grow and bud with a rapidity, especially in the north, almost visible to the human eye, and adorn themselves in ever more and more brilliant greenery; when there is a never-ceasing movement on the water, in the fields, the forest, and the sky, until at last, as Aksakoff says, 'Nature attains her full magnificence, and, as it were, of herself grows calm.' But for country dwellers in Russia, though they are spared 'the changing agony of the doubtful spring' familiar to inhabitants of these isles, this season has one great drawback. It is the time of *rasputitsa*, when through melting snow the roads are impossible for either wheels or sledge, and many villages can be approached only by boat. I am half disposed to decide for the winter. It is true that Russia is rightly termed the Land of the North, for by climatic conditions it is virtually shifted several degrees nearer the pole than its actual geographical position. The Lapps have reason for including in their vocabulary twenty words for ice, eleven for cold, forty-one for snow, and twenty-six for the processes of freezing and thawing. But once the snow has made smooth winter roads, and the whole country lies under a sparkling sheet of white, there are constantly days when the peasant children in short sheepskins



toboggan down sloping fields, and when for any healthy person it is a crying shame to remain indoors. You join the tobogganers, or on the indispensable ski go hunting in the woods or sweeping over the snow-covered fields with long ropes tied to racing sledges. Before turning homewards from skiing, while the driver rests his horses, you may ask him to call for wolves, and if he can—for it requires some knack, as well as lungs like bellows—he will howl in a peculiar drawn-out wail to which, amid the stillness and gathering darkness, may come from far away the sudden answer of a mother-wolf. If the call be repeated, she will come nearer and nearer till the horses shiver with fright. Then ‘vperyott!’ (Forward!) shouts the driver, and they gallop for home.

On such days mere driving itself is rich in impressions. The runners creak loudly in the frosty air. The narrow track is marked on either side by bundles of straw in Central Russia, but by branches in this northern land where wood is abundant. The driver stands in the front of the sledge wrapped in his warm sheepskin with its tall collar, and his long knout trails behind like a serpent over the snow. When it is somewhat colder, three or five suns burn dully like tarnished copper

in the sky, and in the evening you watch, entranced, the roll and play of the Northern Lights. The three horses of the *troika* move swiftly in a line—in goose-file, as the Russians say—now over shining expanses of unbroken white, now down avenues of magnificent birches. Over the front horse the driver can exercise little power, and it is trained to become thoroughly familiar with the roads; for it bears a heavy responsibility in stormy days when a *metyel* rages, and the sledge is beyond sight of the village lights and beyond sound of the church bells, rung to guide people home in the drifting snow or darkness. Driving is terrible then. The horses' nostrils become choked with frozen moisture, and every now and again the driver stops to pull out from them great chunks of ice. Korolenko well describes how the jingle of the bells sounds thick and heavy like the sound of a spoon struck against a full tumbler. 'Your breath catches,' he continues in the same passage, 'you blink your eyes—between the eyelashes are icicles. The cold gets in under the clothes, then into the muscles, the bones, to the brain of the bones as is said—and it's not said for nothing. Impressions gradually become dimmer; people seem more disagreeable. . . . In the end you muffle up as close as you can,

settle a bit more comfortably, and try for one end, as little movement as possible, as little thought as possible. You sit, you gradually freeze, and you wait with a kind of terror till that awful forty to fifty versts' driving be ended.'

In Russian country life, with its enormous distances, horses and driving play a great part. On every highroad are post-stations about twenty miles from each other, where horses must be supplied to all applicants equipped with the necessary papers. The station book shows the number of horses kept and the hours of their departure. Most characteristic of all Russian conveyances is the *tarantass* harnessed to a *troika* (team of three) of roan horses. It is a kind of strong springless phaeton set on four wheels, with a seat for the driver in front and a hood behind. There is a rough low seat for the passengers, which is covered with straw and cushions. On summer roads the three horses are yoked abreast. The centre one, the leader in winter, trots, while the two side-horses gallop with their heads turned sharply outwards. Over the *korienik* (the middle horse) is the high-arched *duga*, or yoke, with its bells. The bearing-line is attached to the top of the *duga*. With *tarantass* and *troika* the Russian gentry do all their travelling when out of railway districts.

In the fast movement, the harmonious action of the horses, and the fine symmetry of the harness, there is something at once barbaric and splendid, the spirit of which Gogol has attempted to seize in the passage that closes the first book of his novel 'Dead Souls':

'It is as if a mysterious power had caught you upon its wing, as if you yourself were flying and everything were flying; the verst-posts fly, the merchants on the boxes of their *kibitkas* fly to meet you, the wood flies on either side, with its dark bands of firs and pines, with its sound of axe-blows and cawing of rooks; all the road flies you know not whither, and is lost in the distance. There is something terrible involved in this rushing past you of things, where you see everything hazily and cannot mark anything for sure, where only the sky above your head, and the light clouds, and the moon piercing them, seem motionless. Ah! *troika*, bird-*troika*, who invented thee? Of a truth, only a bold race could have given thee birth, only that land where men love not to jest, but which has spread itself steadily and smoothly over half the earth, and where you may count the verst-posts till your eyes swim.'

## CHAPTER XXV

### THE URALS

THE long chain of hills that stretch from the Arctic Ocean to the Kirghiz steppes forms a convenient though not a real boundary between Europe and Asia. If we include the continuation of the chain in the islands of Vaigatch and Novaya Zemlya in the north, and in the south the Mugodjai Hills, which terminate between the Caspian and the Aral Seas, the total length of the barrier is considerably over two thousand miles. The name, which is 'Tartar,' means 'the girdle,' or possibly 'the watershed.' As the *Rhippei montes* the Urals were associated in the minds of Roman poets with snow, frost, and extreme cold. The chain is geologically continuous, but there are several gaps, seven in all, on the continent, as well as the Kara and Yegor Straits in the north. It extends through twenty-eight degrees of latitude, through the four zones of ice tundra forest, and steppe.

On the mainland the northernmost ridge, the

Kara or Pai Khoi Hills, runs in a south-easterly direction, almost at right angles with the principal chain, but in a straight line with the islands. The bluffs of low height rise from the marshy plain only in patches. There is no continuous ridge, and hence the water-line is irregular. By the end of summer all the Ural heights are bare of snow, which lingers only in great masses of névé in sheltered gullies or corries. There are no glaciers. But along the promontories of the Pai Khoi the black cliffs that plunge steeply into the sea are fringed with a perpetual ring of ice, broken only by tempestuous surges or crashing floe. In this dreary, empty country there is one famous peak, Bolvano-Is, or the Hill of Idols. It takes its name from the great rock pinnacles that rise along its serrated crest, and are worshipped by the nomad inhabitants. Seen in the soft Northern nights, these black, human-shaped rocks do indeed suggest sinister powers brooding over the tundras. God knows what is in their thoughts! Do they mourn the desolation of these wet lands, and the silence broken only by the hum of mosquitoes, or are they on tireless watch for some foe lurking under the distant horizon? . . .

The tundras are dotted everywhere with lakes and marshes, and often, even when the ground appears



solid, the water that fills every depression is betrayed by 'little windows'—that is to say, open wells surrounded by mosses. On their inhospitable plains the only shelter from the north wind is offered by lichen-covered rocks or stream-beds. On the few slopes exposed to the sun grow rowans, the sacred trees of the ancient Finns, alders, and dwarf birches, and sometimes the ground is carpeted with blue aconite and scarlet peonies, glorified by a Russian traveller as 'the last smile of Nature.' But generally the only vegetation is mosses of pale white or red ochre, under whose tufts here and there shelter the leaves of a few crawling shrubs. There are no regular inhabitants: only Samoyede reindeer-hunters from time to time pitch their black *tchoums*, or huts, in that empty land. The word Samoyede means 'cannibal,' literally 'self-eater' or presumably 'eater of that which is like oneself.' The same formation is seen in the word 'samovar,' literally 'self-boiler,' applied to the water-urn heated with charcoal, which is an essential article of Russian furnishing. But the Samoyedes call themselves Netza or Khassova—that is to say, males. They were once a powerful tribe that roamed from the White Sea to the foothills of the Altai. The place-names of the middle Urals are of Samoyede origin.





A NORTHERN FUR MERCHANT



Pushed north by Mongolian invaders, they drove westwards the Karelian inhabitants of the tundras, who were more closely connected than themselves with the Finnish stock. This latter people were the Tchonds, known to early Russian writers, the folk 'beyond the portages' who possessed 'enormous territories of the chase, with multitudes of mammoths, foxes, and beavers.' But in his turn the Samoyede came in contact with the stream of Russian colonization northwards. There has been preserved a children's rhyme of the early settlers :

'Come and hunt the Samoyede!  
Come and track the Samoyede!  
When we find the Samoyede,  
We'll cut the Samoyede in two.'

Whether the lines represent actual historical relations is questionable—Russian methods of expansion were as a rule totally different—but at any rate the nomads fell under Russian suzerainty. Politically the bonds were, and have been, always of the lightest, but in other respects civilization left the baneful influence that it so often exercised over primitive peoples. No further additions of note were made to the remarkable Samoyede poetry, which is infused with the proud spirit of the Kalevala. The trade in skins and furs fell into Russian

hands. Formerly the hunter used to leave his spoil unguarded in his *tchoum* or at a known point in the tundra, secure in the honesty of the native trader, who deposited a notched bit of wood as a receipt. But the Russian appropriated the skins and furs and left nothing. The monstrous stone idols of Vaigatch, where bears and reindeer were sacrificed to Noun and Vesako, were overturned by missionary zeal. A law of 1835 prohibiting encroachment on Samoyede territory was too late to prevent their losing the most valuable tracts to Russians, and especially to the enterprising and astute Ziranés. This people inhabit the Governments of Archangel, Vologda, and Viatka, and, like the Perms and Votiaks farther to the south, belong also to the Finnish race. In the solitudes of the Ural forests they are an unspoilt race of hunters, but where they have come in contact with the weaker Samoyedes their custom of commercial exploitation has made them crafty, treacherous, and tyrannical. Theoretically all these people are Christian, but polygamy is not infrequent, and pagan ideas linger very near the surface. Thus, the Votiak crossing a stream throws a tuft of grass to the current, and cries to the Water Spirit, 'Do not hold me!' The Permian recruit, when he sets out for the barracks and kisses his parents,





SAMOVEDES

pays obeisance to the Fire Spirit by bowing to the stove.

The Urals proper begin about 68° lat. within the Arctic Circle, and their northern division extends as far south as the Deneshkin Rock, in the sixtieth parallel. From the principal chain a number of subsidiary ridges run out westwards, the most interesting of which culminates in the gaunt precipices of Sablya. Farther south, near the pyramid of Tell-Pos-Is or Nepubi Nior, silver pines, birches, and larches, begin to clothe the lower slopes. On the Asiatic side the water drains to the Ob; on the west the hill streams hurry through romantic glens to the Petchora. In one of these, in the upper valley of the Schtchongor, are the famous cascades called the Three Iron Gates, where the cliffs overhanging the dark water are cut into enormous columns by vertical fissures, and are of dazzling whiteness. Along these rivers are the rare villages of the Finnish or Russian settlers, lying at vast distances from each other in the woods. Even within recent years surveyors have found, occasionally, hamlets living in Tolstoyan felicity, ignorant of the nature of a Central Government and the burdens it imposes. Life in these forests has been admirably portrayed by Ryeshnetnikoff, a



writer of last century, who has described his own youth in a Permian village without much striving after artistic composition, but in straightforward, vigorous prose that flows with freshness and truth. The northern Urals contain the finest peaks of the whole chain. The bold isolated heights with their richly sculptured corries and serrated ridges are real mountains.

This cannot be said of the central and southern Urals, which are for the most part thickly-forested, low, hummocky ridges. Only near the mines as a general rule are the woods cleared. All the central hills are enormously rich in minerals, and comparatively large finds are made also of precious stones, such as sapphires, agates, amethysts, and jasper. Here, too, are obtained the beautiful alexandrite and malachite used so effectively for ornamentation in the Russian churches. The whole country is a treasure-store, still little drawn on and incalculably rich; only coal is absent, and its place is at present easily supplied by the practically boundless forests. Most of the mines in operation—of recent years many have closed—are on the Asiatic side. Here and there are primitive galleries called ‘Tchond mines,’ in which numerous copper, but no bronze, instruments have

been found. Their workers may have died out or moved elsewhere before the discovery of bronze. Some of the most productive of these ancient mines, it is said, remain unknown; the few natives who found them in the heart of the hills kept silence through fear of forced labour, and the secret died with them. But this may be only an interesting tradition. The centre of the mining district is the flourishing town of Yekaterinburg, in the Government of Perm, founded in 1721, where there are a mining school and the head-office of the Government Board of Administration of Mines. It lies in the division between the central and southern Urals, and is only nine hundred feet above sea-level. In this vicinity in 1575 Timoseyeff Yermak with his Cossacks, fleeing from Muscovite troops, made a momentous crossing into Asia. Taking service with the merchants Stroganoff, the ancestors of the noble and wealthy family whose palace is one of the ornaments of the Nevski Prospect, he gradually pushed eastwards, and in 1581 stormed Isker or Sibir, the capital of the Tartan Tsar of the land. Its ruins may still be traced on the right bank of the Irtych, some fifteen miles beyond Tobolsk. Yermak won pardon for his former depredations by presenting Ivan the

Terrible with his vast acquisitions. This was the beginning of the long-neglected but inexhaustibly rich empire of Siberia.

The southern Urals begin south of the Yekaterinburg gap, near the sources of the Ufa. Like the central, they abound in mineral wealth. A little to the north of Zlatousk the chain breaks into three separate branches, which open towards the south like a fan. Of these, the most easterly is prolonged in the Mugodjai hills that terminate in the steep plateau of Usturt, between the Caspian and the Aral. The low declivities of the central range sink gradually to the Kirghiz steppes. The western is the most important of the three, and comprises the highest point in the whole Ural system. That is Yaman Tau, a dull, bald hill to the east of the town of Ufa. From this western range a long low band called the Obshtchi Syrt runs north of Orenburg towards the Volga.

Only rarely does the scenery of the southern Urals recall the majestic outlines and savage desolation of the north. There are, indeed, several rocky heights to the north of Ufa that rise not unimpressively over a wilderness of boulder-strewn scree, but they lack the conditions that we associate with real mountain scenery. Of bold con-



A WOLF-HUNT



tour, individuality, and splendid or even apparent inaccessibility, the southern Urals have nothing. They have nothing, either, of the intricate sculpture and rich colouring that characterize Skye or Lofoten. For the most part they are steep, densely-forested ridges, of uniform height and featureless monotony. Where a bare summit affords a view-point, the prospect generally is of undistinguishable deep valleys with silver ribbons of water amid the dark green of sharply-rising forests. But where the hill lines end, especially if they run at right angles to a river, the scene is full of a quiet charm. There will be, probably, clumps of trees by the bank, behind that a small meadow with haystacks, where the peasants' shackled horses hobble over the grass to the jangling of the bells tied round their necks. Beyond the ground rises, covered with maples or oaks or birches. Sometimes the slopes may be treeless, and the simple yet subtle moulding of the hollows in the hill face show brown with scorched grass where the marmots call to each other, or dark green with wild-strawberry plants; or, again, there may be a clump of trees on the summit only, the resting-place of the great bald-headed eagles called *behrkuts*. The forests, unless of birch, are oppressive in their dense



luxuriance, and, above all, in their want of life. Only the *behrkuts* and astonishing numbers of hawks of different kinds sweep heavily over the trees. There are countless varieties of jewelled insects, but practically no small birds, and hence none of that atmosphere of constant twittering and hopping from bough to bough that animate the English woods with 'all the live murmur of a summer's day.' The features of southern Ural scenery that stamp themselves most strongly on the memory are not the hills themselves, but these illimitable silent forests and the lonely rivers.

In the agricultural villages in the Urals there are few obvious contrasts with peasant life in Central Russia. Here also are the long streets of wooden huts, the starling-posts, the wells with suspended poles, the courtyards with the brownish wattled fences. Generally speaking, the Ural peasants, however, are better off. Their soil is nearer a condition of virgin fertility. They have themselves more land, and in Bashkir districts can lease large areas on reasonable terms. Wood, too, is abundant and cheap. This comparatively secure position, and the fact that here, on the outskirts of the Muscovite empire, serfdom did not press so heavily on the life of the people, have





A SUMMER'S DAY IN THE COUNTRY



given them certain psychological characteristics of their own. They are probably the most practical, matter-of-fact, hard-headed part of the Russian race. Though not so sturdily independent as the northern peasantry, they are much more so than the central, and would be astonished at the servility common in rural England. This is especially true of the mining districts, where the people have been brought in touch with Jews, administrative exiles, and master workmen from towns or Western Europe. The Duma representatives from this country are exclusively Left. But the enlightenment in the mines and works is often but a half-education that produces violent prejudices, an intolerant class pride, and a coarseness of mind entirely foreign to the real peasant. The material prosperity, too, has inevitably affected rural simplicity, and morality is as little a strong point in such villages as temperance. There are many English managers throughout the Urals, and their general testimony agrees that in his duties the Russian workman is industrious, intelligent, and reliable.

In addition to the mines, there are several large industrial works in this country. One of these is the glassworks at Bohoyavlenski (the Place of

the Appearance of God), situated on the River Usolka, which takes its name from a salt spring near the village. The medical properties of this spring are ascribed locally, not to the action of the salt, but to the special providence of Heaven indicated by the discovery of a holy *ikon* in the water. This was found by the priests of a neighbouring village, and is borne far and wide throughout the district, bringing large revenues to their church. Every autumn a great procession of peasants goes to the spring, taking their sick with them to drink of the sacred water and bathe in the river. My first stay here happened to coincide with this pilgrimage. The pilgrims on that occasion cut down the hay and the trees on the landowner's ground near the well, and when foresters were sent to prevent them, they thrashed these, saying: 'Can't we even worship God as we please?' The extensive red brick works with the great chimney and clouds of smoke lie by the river. Beyond rises a slight eminence, on which is a workmen's club. This contains a library and an excellent hall for concerts or dramatic performances, and from here in the evenings a gramophone blares the somewhat *risqué* words of a modern factory song. The bridge across the

river is lit with electric light. On this side of it is the village proper, with a hospital, two schools—one a *Zemstvo* school for boys, the other for girls, financed, like the hospital, by the proprietors of the works—and the substantial houses with their green or red iron roofs, which have an air of comparative affluence. The Belgian glass-blowers who came here to instruct the first workmen were accompanied by their wives, and from these the peasant women acquired a taste for European dress. Hats, however, have not yet ousted the shawl. There are several picturesque spots in the village—the white church amid its green trees, the river-banks, the rising ground behind the landowner's house, from which you see a long stretch of the *Usolka* Valley and the wooded hill ridges. Especially fine is the great artificial dam, which in its upper part is reedy and haunted by wild-duck. On the embankment, at its lower end by the works, are piled vast stacks of wood for use as fuel. When I was last here the sluices were being repaired, and the scaffoldings were full of workmen, who, as they strained together at ropes or logs, sang the chanty 'Yestchoa rasik' (Once more—a little once more).

All over Russia in the country the summer

evenings are full of music and singing. In every village the *balalaika* and melodeon are played by peasant lads, who sit on benches outside the huts or stroll in threes and fours down the street, exchanging rustic compliments with similar groups of peasant girls. Elsewhere isolated choruses of male and female voices rise by the banks of pond or river. The women's notes are too shrill and nasal to be agreeable except from a distance, but nowhere else in the world are men's untrained voices so rich, powerful, and harmonious, as in Russia. Everyone knows about the organ-like depth and volume of the bass voices in the monastery choirs, but it is impossible to have an adequate idea of the country without imagining, together with all its poverty and greyness, these bands of soldiers singing at the front of marching regiments, the songs of the peasant women returning home from field work, the Volga chanties, the leader's solo and the answering chorus of workmen's *artels*, when bearded, red-shirted peasants haul at beams or at ships' ropes, and the sound of their deep voices vibrates in powerful waves through the sultry summer air.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### THE VOLGA

RUSSIAN history is inextricably woven with its rivers. The Dnieppr, says M. Rambaud with perfect justice, brought it in contact with Byzantium, the Volga with Asia, and the Neva with Western Europe. But in the national life neither the Neva nor even 'Dnipro batko' of the Ukraine has played such a part as 'little mother Volga,' the great flood known to classical writers as the Rha, and to Armenians as the Tamar, whose Finnish name means 'Great Water.' Its basin formed almost exclusively the stage on which was played the history of the old sixteenth-century Russia, and as early as the eighth century a busy traffic went up and down its course between Central Asia and Eastern Europe right up to the Baltic.

The Volga traverses eight governments, and waters a country three times as great as France. Its course of 3,458 versts makes it the longest as well as the largest river in Europe. It rises in



the north-west district of the Government of Tver close on the Novgorod border, one of the most marshy districts in Western Russia. From the low wooded heights of the Valdai Hills you can see the upper valley of the Western Dvina, which falls into the Gulf of Riga, and a whole network of lakes and bogs. Through these the first feeble current of the Volga flows so sluggishly that its tributary the Jonkona sometimes forces it back into the long Lake Peno, from which it has just emerged. But a stream from a sister lake almost doubles its waters, and already it is navigable for small boats. It is only at Rjeff, however, once a stronghold of the Old Believers, that it takes to its breast a crowd of barges loaded with country produce. Soon after Rjeff it turns north-east. Passenger traffic begins at Tver, which lies on the railway between Petersburg and Moscow. An old seat of Northern Princes, it passed into the power of Moscow at the end of the fifteenth century. Ivan the Terrible made fearful havoc here when he passed on his way to subdue Novgorod. Now it is engrossed in commerce, especially in cotton and leather embroidery, the patterns of which may have been handed down by the Mongols. From the promenade on the

Volga right bank the visitor receives an excellent idea of the growth of industry in modern Russia. He sees a perfect forest of masts ranging along the river-side, and his ears are deafened by the hooting of factory whistles. But beyond Tver the scenery down the river is almost entirely of a rural type. One passes a monastery or two, with their white walls standing out among the trees, some small uninteresting towns, and one, Yaroslavl, of extreme interest from its ancient history and picturesque appearance. But for the most part one sees only fields, forests, and peasant villages. The picture is steeped in a profoundly Russian atmosphere of breadth, greyness, and a certain melancholy. One is most conscious of this just before sunrise, when a faint streak of light hangs above the dark forest tops, and the early morning sounds float across the water from the village on the bank, and when there comes into one's mind the charming folk-verse :

‘Over Holy Russia the cocks are crowing ;  
Soon will the dawn be over Holy Russia.’

As one approaches Nijni Novgorod, the red earth wall on the right bank, in which are innumerable small deep holes where swallows nest, becomes appreciably higher than the left. The height varies

from about fifty to a hundred feet. This feature, due to the rotation of the earth, is characteristic of all southern Russian rivers, and continues to be true of the Volga till the flat, lifeless steppes below Tsaritsin. Extraordinarily beautiful is the view of Nijni as one draws near it on a summer evening, with the green domes of the churches, the white houses half hid in trees mottling the steep slope, the grey walls of the Kreml creeping up the hill, and its towers silhouetted against the soft twilight sky, or when, later, one by one the stars shine forth in heaven and the town lights twinkle on the river, when the sonorous voices of boatmen, or *burlaks* send swelling over the dark current in slow chorus, that most glorious and unforgettable of all the Volga songs: ‘Down our little-mother Volga, On the broad stretch of water (*Rasigrálasya pogóda, Pogodúshka verkhováya, Verkhováya volnováya*).’ Nowhere in our own songs, not even in the Jacobite laments, does there throb just such a majestic note of heart-sickness; perhaps the nearest approach to it is in the refrain of the Highland emigrants in Canada:

‘Listen to me as when ye heard our father  
 Sing long ago the song of other shores;  
 Listen to me, and then in chorus gather  
 All your deep voices as ye pull your oars.’



RAFTS ON THE VOLGA



Before the introduction of steam, the numbers of the *burlaks*, peasants who tow the Volga boats, amounted to three hundred thousand. The work was lightly paid and extremely heavy, and laid a severe strain on eyes, legs, and lungs. The journey from Astrakhan to Nijni took only seventy days, and many hard experiences went to fashion their saying, 'Now the Volga's a mother, now a step-mother,' curiously reminiscent of a famous phrase of Æschylus.

At Nijni one changes into larger and in every way more comfortable boats for the voyage to Astrakhan. The scenery itself is perhaps scarcely so pleasing as above the confluence of the Oka, or it may be that by this time one feels its monotonous sameness. Save that the river is broader, its main features remain unchanged. As before, the right bank is high, the left flat, and the background shut in with forests; as before, there are villages and churches, and windmills waving their great arms. The population, however, on the banks is no longer purely Russian. In Kazan, indeed, the Russians number only forty-one per cent. of the inhabitants. We are now in the country of Finnish or Mongolian tribes, and representatives of these, veiled Tartar ladies, swarthy pedlars, or Lapp-like peasants, add a



touch of colour to the Russian tourists and merchants, and the landowners with their families returning from Petersburg to their country estates. From Nijni to Kazan the river flows generally in an easterly direction, from Kazan to Tsaritsin in a south-westerly direction, but much more south than west, and from Tsaritsin to Astrakhan it runs south-east.

Kazan, which lies three hundred and eighty versts below Nijni, on several hills on the left bank of the Kazanka, was the capital of a Tartar empire that arose after the dissolution of the Golden Horde. It was stormed by Ivan the Terrible on October 2, 1552, after an obstinate resistance. Sentimental historians love to record how the carnage within its walls drew tears from the eyes of the pitiless Tsar himself, who said: 'They are not Christians, but yet they are men.' During his stay he began the work of surrounding the old wooden Kreml, built in the fifteenth century by Qulau-Mahmet-Khan, with a stone wall fortified by towers. The bulk of these were destroyed by Pugatchoff's Cossacks in the rising of 1774, and, to judge by the three which remain to-day, their loss is not a profound calamity. Only one building survives from ante-Russian







GETTING CAVIARE AT ASTRAKHAN

times, the tower of Souioubeka, from which a Tartar Princess of this name flung herself to escape, like another Cleopatra, gracing the conqueror's triumph. It is said to be held in veneration by the Tartars. From the top of its seven stories, more than two hundred feet high, is a remarkable view,—especially in spring, when the Volga and Kazanka flood an enormous expanse of country,—of the bulbous Christian cupolas and substantial Russian houses in the centre of the town, and its Mohammedan suburbs with their tapering minarets. Situated at the meeting-place of the Siberian, Caspian, and Baltic trade routes, Kazan would seem to be particularly favoured for commercial activity. It suffers, however, from one overwhelming disadvantage, for the Volga gradually recedes westward pursued by the suburbs, and the town proper is now left behind three miles from the bank. The University is important chiefly for the instruction given in Oriental languages. The museum contains interesting antiquities from the ruins of Bulgary discovered in the time of Peter the Great.

These lie a hundred versts down the river. The Bulgars were a Finno-Turkish people whose origin is unknown, but who probably settled on the Volga about the beginning of our era. Their

empire was overthrown by the Mongols, passed under the Khans of the Golden Horde, and was destroyed afresh when Timurlain flung his masses of men across Eastern Russia. It was possibly then that the Bulgarians started on the journey which was eventually to preserve, if not perpetuate, their name in Southern Europe. The ruins lie near the modern village, which was built of part of their stones.

The mighty River Kama, which joins the Volga below Kazan, is the southern boundary of a wild territory known as 'the land of woods.' Between it, indeed, and the River Unsha, which flows into the Volga above Nijni, most of the country is still covered with dense forests. These formed an admirable refuge for sectarians fleeing from persecution. Up to the present day there linger here the beliefs and customs so sympathetically portrayed by Melnikoff in his 'In the Forests' and 'In the Hills.' There are hermitages and villages in the Vetluga basin full of the most valuable ethnographical records. The source of the Kama lies in marshy country to the east of Viatka. It first describes a circuitous course to the north, and then flows south past Perm. Traversing the Governments of Perm, Ufa, Viatka, and Kazan, a basin at least as

great as France, it is by far the principal tributary of the Volga, and in May the meeting of the two rivers is like a boundless sea. Just as the Oka seemed the larger stream at Nijni, so here, too, the Kama appears the true river, and the Volga only its feeder. Its course, rather than that of the other, is followed by the joint stream, and for a long way its clear, bright waters flow distinct from the muddy, turbid waves of the Volga.

Below Kazan the yellow cornfields on the banks give place to dark forests of oaks, pines, and firs, and the bosom of the river is studded with small picturesque wooded islands. By common consent, the finest bit of scenery in the whole journey is that which refreshes the eye after passing the town of Simbirsk, and before the ship drops anchor by the Samara wharves. Here the left bank is hilly, and the right rises into cragged wooded heights with fantastic outlines known in order as the Jegonlevski, Gretchonlevski, and Mordvashanski Hills. Through them the Volga vainly seeks a passage, and is forced eastwards. Oak and lime trees cover the steep slopes, which are rent by deep sinister gorges and ravines. These, tradition says, were the refuge of the Volga brigands, and their shadow lies so dark on the water that the fanciful tourist may easily

conjure up a picture of the black craft moored to the sandy shore, and the buccaneers sprawling round enormous fires. In his story 'Visions,' Turguenieff has given in a few bold, sweeping colours a fine description of these pirates and their most famous and formidable leader, the Don Cossack Stenka Razine, who for three years terrorized the Lower Volga and the Caspian. The sketch tells of a man whom an unearthly lover bears wherever he pleases, to distant countries or into the distant past. On this occasion they stand by the Volga at night, and, though he sees nothing save the dark water, he is conscious suddenly of the 'noise of screams and cries, furious cursing and laughter, the laughter worst of all, the strokes of oars and blows of axes, slamming as of doors and sea-chests, the scrape of digging and wheels, the neighing of horses, the sound of alarums, the clang of chains, drunken songs and the grinding of teeth, unconsolable weeping, pitiful despairing silence, exclamations of command, death-rattles and bravado whistling.' With masterly art Turguenieff pictures the approach of Stenka Razine. The man still sees nothing, but feels all at once as if an enormous body were moving straight towards him. 'Stepan Timofeyitch,' the corsairs shout, 'here comes Stepan Timofeyitch,





BLESSING THE WATER IN THE COUNTRY





our little father, our ataman, our feeder'; and then a terrible voice booms a death-sentence to their prisoners: 'Frolka'—this was his brother and lieutenant—'where are you, dog? Kindle up on all sides! Take the axes to the cursed white-hands!' The man feels the heat of flames, the biting smoke, and at the same moment something warm like blood splashes on his hands and face. The brigands burst into inhuman guffaws, and he faints away. Right up to the nineteenth century, the mouth of the Usa, which breaks through the hills here, was a nest of pirates. Here from an outlook on the cliffs they kept a watch for merchant vessels, and as soon as one was spied the banks re-echoed with the ominous rallying-cry, '*Sarin na kitchku!*' Captain, crew, and *burlaks*, fell on their faces, and the freebooters took what they pleased.

At length, at the narrow Samara Gates, the river breaks impatiently through its barrier, and turns first sharply south, and then as sharply westward. Samara, like Simbrisk and Sysran, was founded to guard the Russian frontier against the Kalmucks, the Bashkirs, and the Crimean Tartars. From here in the first half of the eighteenth century a line of fortresses was built to Orenburg, and under their protection into the Bashkir country swept that wave

of Russian colonists which Aksakoff in a famous work half genuinely deplures. The river here is bordered by woods and high chalk cliffs, and for thirty-five versts below Samara the Serpent Hills stretch in gentle slopes above the right bank. At Saratoff, the largest town on the Volga, the river is two miles broad and already at sea-level. The volume of water is probably as great here as at its mouth, for in its lower course there are few tributaries, little rain, and continual evaporation. On the left bank is a whole succession of flourishing German colonies, where the descendants of the settlers placed here by Catharine the Great are still distinguished from their Russian neighbours by religion, dress, language, cleanliness, and prosperity. Saratoff—a Tartar name meaning 'yellow hill'—has a new University, but otherwise the place is uninteresting.

Much less dull are the streets of Tsaritsin, with their motley crowd of Tartars, Kalmueks, Cossacks from the Don and Kirghiz, with long flowing *chapans*, fastened with silk or leathern girdles, and round, pointed white felt hats. This town has been connected by popular etymology with the death of a King's daughter, but the word means properly 'yellow water.' With its extremely



A CARPET FAIR AT ASTRAKHAN



favourable position for commerce, at the point of junction with the Don, it has grown with American rapidity, and is one of the busiest and most thriving of the Volga towns. Some way to the east lies the district town of Tsareff, in the neighbourhood of which was Sarai, the capital of the Khan of the Golden Horde. It was here that the Russian Princes paid obeisance to the Tartars. After Tsaritsin the appearance of the Volga changes.

‘Then sands begin

To hem his watery course, and dam his streams,  
And split his currents.’

But this archipelago of small islands is at length passed, and once more its giant flood, which in spring has no end to it, stretches itself out in unbroken expanse on either hand. The right bank is no longer hilly, and from midstream it is often difficult to say where the water ends and the land begins. Now and again a tug pulls long caravans of barges upstream from Astrakhan, and white or brown-sailed fishing-boats make for tree-sheltered villages on the banks; but save for these and the swallows skimming low over the surface there is nothing to relieve the desolation, nothing to confine the illimitable spaces of river, steppe, and

sky. Unimaginable is the play of light at sunrise and sunset on that majestic sheet of water, with its broad, ever-changing streaks of gold, orange, lilac, mauve, and blue. The great steppes are the dried-up bed of an ancient sea, of which the Caspian is a remainder. They end abruptly on the Caspian, which is itself gradually shrinking, and when strong north winds blow the sea is driven far back. They are mostly unsuitable for agriculture, and are given up to Kirghiz and Kalmuck nomads, who wander over them with their black *kibithkas*, rearing cattle.

This latter people appeared first in Europe in 1630, under the leadership of their Khan Ho-Yurluk, and soon moved west of the Caspian. They vowed 'perpetual subservience' to the Muscovite Tsar, but in practice this relation was purely fictitious, and their predatory bands swept as far north as Penza and Tamboff. Wearying at last of the constant conflict with Russian forces, the whole nation in 1771 set back for the slopes of the Altai. De Quincey has drawn a powerful picture of their flight, and of what befell those settled west of the Volga who came to the river after the ice had broken. The nearness of the East is suggested in their felt tents which dot the steppe,



their pagodas, the hum of praying-wheels, and the eternal Buddhist formula, which half Asia repeats countless times a day, 'Om Maneh Padmeh Hum!' (O Jewel of the Lotus Flower!) They are of middle stature and squat figure. They have large heads, black straight hair, thin beards, slits of eyes, and a darkish yellow complexion. Naturally kindly, straightforward, and honest, they have become towards strangers secretive, cunning, and vindictive; when in a position of power they are tyrannical, when powerless abjectly servile. They love drink, cards, and idleness, and everyone, above all the women, smokes heavily. They wear the loose Caucasian *beshmets*, of one piece, with a roomy cut-out breast. The fashion of their four-cornered hats has been followed by Russian coachmen. Though in the steppe there are a few *khotons*, or groups of huts, and near Astrakhan some villages clustering round a *khurul*, or temple, they are still mostly nomad. The early attempts at making them adopt a settled mode of life merely led to the introduction of Russian colonies. Thus, in 1846, to settle the roads between Astrakhan and Stavropol, forty-four stations, each with fifty Russian and fifty Kalmuck 'courts,' were laid out in the steppe. The Kalmucks were offered eighty acres of land

apiece, the buildings and fifteen roubles, but not a single one agreed to settle ; whereupon the empty homesteads were occupied by fresh Russian peasants. Only their princes and lamas are burnt after the Indian custom. The common dead are wrapped in a piece of old felt and thrown into dis-used wells or deep holes, or in winter simply into a snow-drift.

Astrakhan from ancient times was a settlement of Asiatic hordes. From the third century of our era it formed the capital of the powerful Khasar Empire that stretched over nearly all South Russia. The old town lay some eight miles farther to the north than the present city, which was founded in the fourteenth century, and which, till its capture by the Russians in 1556, was the seat of a Tartar Khanate. Thanks to its position for trade with the Caucasus, Persia, and Eastern Russia, Astrakhan has developed into a flourishing port, second only in the south littoral to Odessa. The chief industry is connected with the catching and curing of fish, and for this purpose every spring there pours into the town an army of Kalmucks, Persians, Kirghiz, and peasants from the neighbouring villages.

The Volga delta begins about thirty miles above Astrakhan. The number of the various channels

amounts to more than eighty. They are exposed to constant changes, and especially to the change caused by the rotation of the earth. Thus the main channel, which in the sixteenth century was the most easterly, and in the reign of Peter about midway, is now the Baktemir, the most westerly. These streams, with their branches, flow through an archipelago of islands of various shapes and sizes, along which stretch dismal dunes of clay and sand about thirty feet high, either destitute of vegetation or covered here and there with rank steppe-grasses. A few fishing settlements are scattered along their banks. Thus 'shorn and parcelled,' winding between 'beds of sand and matted rushy isles,' the Volga at length quietly and imperceptibly—for no definite border-line may be marked—pours its waters into the Caspian Sea.

## CHAPTER XXVII

### AN EASTERN GOVERNMENT

THERE are few districts in Russia, 'the land of forty races,' where there have not lived alongside with the Russian peasants peoples who differed from them in customs, language, physical type, and religion. West of the Volga the people were mostly of Finnish stock, and have largely died out, or migrated, or been absorbed into the great Russian race. The third process was facilitated by their conversion to Christianity. The word 'pravoslavniy,' or 'orthodox,' is almost equivalent to the word 'Russian.' Thus whole villages of purely Finnish peoples have gradually shed their old tongue, customs, and pagan faith, and adopted those of the Russians. But even where inter-marriage has blended the two stocks nearly, it is not difficult to detect physical and social characteristics due to Finnish influence. The actual process of absorption can still be seen. While staying in the Government of Tamboff in the summer of

1908, I saw a group of women thinning vegetables in a garden, whose Lapp-like features and curiously white costumes were entirely non-Slavonic. A tall, lean Russian peasant with a hatchet-shaped face stood by superintending, and as we approached he kept urging the women, 'Work! work!' They spoke a broken Russian, but had forgotten their own tongue. These people were Mestcheraki, but call themselves Russians. The Tartars alone call them by their proper name, while the Russian peasant calls them Tchuvash and the Tchuvash call them Tartars.

East of the Volga fusion has not taken place on so extensive a scale. With regard to the Finnish non-Mohammedan tribes, the Russian settlements have been formed here only comparatively recently, and in the case of the more numerous Mohammedan peoples Islamism has proved an insurmountable obstacle. Thus the various racial peculiarities are still well preserved. Over great tracts of country, especially in the hills, only one people may be found; while in others, within the radius of a few miles, there is a perfect ethnological museum.

First among the non-Slavonic peoples for industry, prosperity, and education, must be placed the Tartars, who appeared in Russia in 1240, and

whose dominion so profoundly influenced the course of Russian history. Politically now they are of no moment, but they still leave the impression of a fine virile race. In the Caucasian districts and round the Caspian they show an open preference for Turkey, whither many of the Crimean horde emigrated after the annexation of the peninsula. But in Russia proper they are perfectly content. The Russians have been careful never by overzealous missionary activity to fan the slumbering flames of fanaticism. Indeed, the student of Russian ecclesiastical history must note a remarkable contrast between the treatment of the Tsar's non-Slavonic subjects and the measures adopted towards dissent from the Orthodox Church. In appearance the Tartar is broad-shouldered, with oval face, projecting skull-bones, narrow, black, expressive, eyes, and a thin wedge-shaped beard. The women run to flesh, and spoil their complexions by over-application of paint and rouge. Though their villages are strikingly superior to the Russian, they are not good agriculturists. Scarcely a year passes but they apply for help to the local Zemstvo, confident that 'the Russian Tsar is rich, he will feed us.' But in other than rural pursuits they show a high degree of industry, perseverance,





RICH TARTARS





and practical ability. These qualities are reinforced by the sobriety which makes them invaluable as coachmen or waiters. They recruit largely the ranks of the lower servants in the Imperial household and great caravanserais of Petersburg and Moscow. Nearer the railways many of them tour the country as pedlars, with *khalats* and cloth goods flung over their arm. They are well educated. A school is attached to nearly every *metchet*, and the mullahs and their assistants teach the boys while their wives instruct the girls. The children stay at school from the age of seven to twelve. The educational course is chiefly religious. Higher instruction is provided in a great Mohammedan college at Ufa, the town magnificently situated above the River Bielaya, and to complete their training the future mullahs go to Bukhara or some other city in Central Asia, or even to Egypt. The mullahs stand on a very different footing in respect to influence and authority than the Christian *pop* in Russian villages. In the Duma elections, as they direct, their people vote to a man, and this discipline almost invariably secures the return of the Mohammedan candidate, even against numerical odds. Comparatively few Tartars are polygamous. Their women for the most part are kept in rigid

seclusion, and only in the very poorest families do they work in the fields.

In this respect they differ from their interesting co-religionists, the Bashkirs, whose women do more than their share of outdoor labour, and are not particularly observant of the rules that enjoin veiling. The precise meaning of the word Bashkir is uncertain; it may be 'dirty head,' or perhaps 'red head' in allusion to the not uncommon reddish hair, which among Russians is rare. Of mixed Finnish and Mongolian blood, they are probably the earliest inhabitants of great tracts in south-eastern Russia. In appearance they are a good-looking, finely-proportioned race, especially the younger woman, whose delicately moulded oval faces and slender figures contrast with the grosser charms of the Tartar beauties. When the Ural Cossacks saw the Maygars in the Hungarian campaign of 1849, they cried out 'Bashkiri!' The man's head is shaved from early childhood, and he never takes off the scull cap, which in summer is covered by a white felt wideawake, and in winter by a thick hat. Their dress is a long white shirt of coarse linen open at the front—whereas the Russian shirt is divided at the side of the neck—and ungirdled, with a pair of trousers

tucked into cloth puttees. Over the shirt the humble Bashkir wears a sleeveless coat, and the mullahs and rich men a coat with sleeves whose length is proportionate to the wearer's dignity. While the common people wear *lapti*, their betters have heel-less top-boots of white felt or fine leather, profusely decorated with coloured silk. The Bashkir woman is clad in bright-coloured shirt and trousers, and loves to deck herself with beads and trinketry. Some of the old filigree work, the secret of which they have lost, was remarkably beautiful. They are good-tempered, friendly, hospitable, and lazy, a race of hand-to-mouth fatalists. The Bashkir himself does nothing beyond a little sowing or haymaking, and his favourite occupations when possible are finding and robbing wild-bees' nests, hunting, and fishing. But changed conditions have sadly affected the old *dolce far niente* existence. In the hills, indeed, where they roam over enormous districts breeding horses, the easy, patriarchal life is still more or less maintained. In the plains, where their land is more curtailed and yet offers the only means for subsistence, they are perforce placed in the transitional stage between nomad and settled life. Even here in summer they generally

migrate to a second village in wilder country, or, at the least, on their own land set up rough bush shelters. In prosperous districts these summer quarters behind the village huts are white tents of thin felt, furnished with pillows and carpets. To their new conditions the Bashkirs have not adapted themselves. They are miserable farmers. In their wretched villages and tumble-down hovels they are dying out fast. Only in summer does life flow easily, with abundance of horse-flesh and *kroot*, which are flat cakes made of cow's milk, and *koumiss*, which is fermented mare's milk, not boiled, but set for hours in a place moderately exposed to the sun. Only then do the notes of the flute-like *tchebizga* ring out high and clear among the woods, and the Bashkirs sing their monotonous songs.

Among the Tartar group is often included the Tchuvash race, chiefly on linguistic grounds, which are notoriously unreliable, but it seems probable that this people has just as many Finnish affinities as Tartar. Their appearance and costumes, the prevailing colour of which is blue for men and red for women, point to northern origin. Through the influence of the schools they are becoming rapidly Russianized and Christian. St. Nicholas the Wonder-Worker, however, they consider

more important than Christ, and many of them still carry in the bosom of their dress little roughly-hewn deities of wood, on whom they visit punishment in times of agricultural depression. Their pagan religion was dualistic. Tora was the good spirit, and Shaitan the bad; but there were also a number of subsidiary beings, either good, such as light, or bad, such as famine. The women's costumes and head-dresses are covered with coins and brass soldier-buttons, and their legs are swathed in such thick coverings that they look like pillars, for they consider it immodest that these should be seen, and that to go barefooted, as the Russian women do, exceeds all bounds of propriety and shame. The Tchuvash are quiet, industrious agriculturists, but also great drunkards and horse-stealers. They are of small stature and feeble physique, with a heavy trailing walk, a pale face, and apathetic look. Something is wrong with their eyes, as with those of the Tcheremisses. Both peoples are decreasing in numbers. The Tcheremiss religion is a mixture of Orthodoxy, Mohammedanism, and Shamanism. Fire dances and sacrifices of white horses continue up to the present day. Their divorce custom is at once simple and dramatic. The couple lie down back

to back bound tightly by a strong cord. Then the village elder draws his knife and cuts the knot, and the two are free to set off in opposite directions. The women's red garments with breast-plate of silver coins, beads, and corals, and the high-pointed hat which falls behind like a hood and is stiffened with ornaments, are even more picturesque than those of the Tchuvash. But first of all in its elegant simplicity is the dress of the Mordva girl—white puttees, trousers, and jacket with a border of blue. This white garb, with the black footgear, has given rise to a Russian pleasantry that greets and irritates the maid whenever she steps abroad: 'Whither, swan, swimmest thou?'

The Mordva played an important part in early Russian history. They occupied all the middle basin of the Volga, from the Urals to the source of the Oka, and more than once assaulted the Nijni fortress which was built to check their raids. They are a fine people to look upon, massively built, with fair hair and complexion, and grey eyes. They are excellent farmers, and are increasing in numbers. The Russian peasantry in backward districts say: 'The Mordva know how to pray better than we; their gods fulfil their prayers better.' They are already, to a great



extent, Russianized, but retain many traces of their pagan religion, especially with regard to ancestor worship. In the beginning of the nineteenth century a Mordva dreamer tried to restore this old faith. 'After you turn again,' he said, 'the whole world will adopt the laws, manners, and dresses, of the Mordva, and in everything will follow Mordva customs, and the Mordva will be free, will not belong to landowners nor pay rent, but will be the first people on the earth.' But this very appeal to the old religion bears indications of the influence of the new. Among them women occupy a comparatively high position. There is very free sexual connection before marriage, but divorce is almost unknown. 'Marriage,' says one of their own proverbs, 'is a bond.' In all questions the husband consults the wife. 'The husband speaks,' another of their sayings declares, 'the wife thinks.' They have some interesting aphorisms illustrative of ideal matrimonial relations, such as: 'With your neighbour deal in roubles, with your wife in caresses;' or again, 'Where love can't, the cudgel can't;' and there is quite an advanced one about the bringing up of children: 'Train a dog with a stick, a child with love.'

With all these various peoples the Russian peasants are on the friendliest terms. The epithet 'Asiatic,' which the angry Russian hurls at the head of his fellow, amid a host of others, such as 'cholera,' 'Anti-Christ,' 'Herod,' or 'Mazeppa,' does imply a certain colour pride, but this amounts to very little. It is an exaggeration to say that Russia is half Asiatic. But she is a vast outlying province of Europe, more in touch with and understanding more of Asia than any other western country. The Russians fraternize with Orientals to a degree intolerable for the arrogance of colour and haughty instincts of the English. On the other hand, they have not our energy and tireless enthusiasm for thrusting reforms on uncivilized races. Hence it comes about that, as an observant English traveller has remarked: 'English administration does a great deal for the native in Asia in a singularly unsympathetic manner, while the Russian does much less, but in a manner the native understands and appreciates.' In the history of European dealings with the East, for which many thoughtful minds believe that Europe will eventually have to pay a heavy retribution, few pages stand out so unsullied by prejudice and cruelty as the Russian annexation and government





STAGE FOR POST-HORSES IN THE URALS

of Central Asia. In the Far East the stains on the Russian record are largely the direct result of sending to these distant provinces where control over representatives was impossible the most worthless civil officials and the scum of the army. It is of profound importance that the two great European powers in Asia should be in sympathy, as far, at least, as concerns Asiatic affairs. There is a statesmanlike passage in Vladimir Solovioff's 'Three Conversations'—the last work that great thinker published—which is full of interest in this connection. 'If in Turkey,' he writes, 'we are for the moment powerless, we can already play a first-class rôle as civilizers in Central Asia, and especially in the Far East, whither it appears history is shifting its centre of gravity. By geographical position, and for other reasons, Russia can do in Central Asia and the Far East more than all other nations, with the exception, of course, of England. Hence the problem of our policy in this direction is a lasting, genuine understanding with England, so that our common work as civilizers may never be perverted into senseless hostility and unworthy rivalry.'

In these Eastern governments in the hot and lazy atmosphere of summer, it is often difficult to

believe that one is in Europe. The mullah's voice intoning solemnly, 'La illaha el Allah,' the Bashkir in his long *khalat* on horseback, the Kerghiz caravan with a string of camels, their greeting, 'Salaam Aleikum,' that bears a meaning over half Asia—all these things suggest the regions north of Tibet. Life is full of the sounds, the colours, the smells of the East. The scenery also is not European, but precisely such as is familiar to English readers through the photographs of Sven Hedin. Over the conical grassy hills, the infinite billowy plains, the pine-fringed blue lakes, the great marshes with their flocks of wild duck, geese, cranes, and swans, there broods a spirit of wildness and luxuriance which gradually comes to exercise over one a vague but irresistible charm. Especially refreshing is this unstinted, unspoiled wealth after one comes from the monotonous colours of Central Russia, and nowhere is it felt more strongly than on the banks of the rivers such as the Kama, the Ufa, or the Bielaya. These have nothing of the perpetual sameness that marks the sedge-bordered lesser streams that sluggishly drive their lifeless waters through the tilled lands westward. They themselves are full of interest; here narrow, swirling, and impetuous, like a mill race; there lying asleep



in warm willow-shaded reaches ; there, again, broken by cascades or stretching out in broad, shallow rapids, in which are set the basket-shaped wattled fish-traps of the Bashkirs. On the banks the scenery unfolds itself in constantly changing but ever-fascinating pictures of maple thickets, clay huts, or wide levels of grassy plain or sand. Now the hills overhang the current ; now, after a bend of the river, they recede to the greyish-purple distance. It was my good fortune to spend two long happy summers on the banks of the Bielaya, and little vignettes come crowding into the memory, a Mordva boy lashing furiously at a yellow, wriggling snake, night-fishing with braziers in drifting boats and the hiss of burning sparks on the water, a procession of Tchuvash women on a dusty road with an *ikon*, long shaky Bashkir bridges with wattled huts, hunting camps in lonely places under whispering birches.

In the rich primeval freshness of this country are steeped the immortal pages of Aksakoff's 'Family Chronicle.' He deploras that much of its former unspoilt, unsullied loveliness is lost, disfigured by the Russian plough and axe ; 'but still,' he says, 'even now, glorious country, you are beautiful ! Clear and transparent, like enormous



deep bowls, are your lakes. Full of water, full of all kinds of fish, are your rivers that now rush swiftly through dells and gorges among the foothills of the Urals, and now quietly and brightly, like amethysts strung on a thread, glide with imperceptible movement over your grassy steppes. In your hurrying hill-streams, clear and cold as ice in sultry summer heat, that run under the shadow of trees and bushes, live all manner of trout pleasant to the taste, and beautiful to the eye, but soon disappearing when man begins to touch with unclean hands the virgin currents of their cool, transparent haunts. Wonderful is the verdure that beautifies your rich black earth, luxuriant fields, and meadows. In spring they shine white with the milky blossom of strawberry plants, and cherry and wild peach trees, and in summer they are covered as with a red carpet with fragrant strawberries and tiny cherries, that later in autumn ripen and turn purple. With abundant crops is rewarded the lazy, rude toil that but here and there, and but somehow or other, turns up your fertile soil with clumsy, primitive plough. Fresh, green, and vigorous, stand your darkling forests, and swarms of wild bees populate your natural hives, storing them full of sweet-smelling lime-tree

honey. And the Ufa marten—prized above all others—not yet has he migrated from the wooded upper waters of the Ufa and the Bielaya! Peaceful and quiet are your patriarchal, primitive inhabitants and owners—the nomad Bashkir tribes. Fewer now, but still great and numerous, are their droves of horses, their herds of cattle, and flocks of sheep. Now, as in bygone years after the cruel stormy winter, the Bashkirs, lean and emaciated as winter flies, with the first spring warmth, with the first pasture grass, drive out to the wilds their droves and flocks half dead with starvation, and drag themselves after them with their wives and children. . . . And in two or three weeks you will not know a single one! Instead of skeleton horses are seen spirited untiring chargers, and now the steppe stallion proudly and jealously guards the pasture-ground of his mares, allowing neither beast nor man approach. The thin winter herd of cattle has become fat, and their dugs and udders are full of nourishing juice. But what cares the Bashkir for fragrant cow's milk? By now the life-giving koumiss is ready, fermented in bags of horse hide, and that blessed draught of heroes, all that can drink, from the babe at the breast to the tottering old men, drink till they are drunk, and in a marvel-

lous fashion disappear all the hardships of winter, and even of old age. The thin faces become round and full; the pale, drawn cheeks are covered with the flush of health. . . . But what a terrible and melancholy appearance have the deserted settlements! Sometimes a passing traveller who has never seen aught of the kind will light upon them and be astonished at the picture of desolation, as if the whole place were dead. The windows of the scattered huts, with the white frames gaping, and the bladder-skin panes taken away, look at him wildly and mournfully, like human faces with gouged out eyes. . . . Here and there howls a dog left on a chain to guard the houses, at long intervals visited and fed by his master; here and there wails a half-wild cat, foraging for unprovided food—and save for them no living thing, not a single human soul. . . .’

## CHAPTER XXVIII

### PROVINCIAL TOWNS

IN A.D. 862, in answer to the Slav appeal, 'Our land is great and fruitful, but order and justice in it there are none: come and take possession and rule over us,' the three brothers Rurik, Sinéous, and Truvor, princes of the Variags, whoever they were, left their country, wherever that was, and entered Russia. Twenty years later, Rurik's son made his residence at Kieff, on the Dnieppr, and from this base the immigrants, who soon became merged with the Slavs, protected all the commerce that passed up and down the Austrvegr or Eastern way of the Sagas. Kieff had been founded some time before by a Slavonic tribe. By its position it was marked out for a great future. It lay at the meeting-point of the zones of forest, black earth, and steppe, and in the neighbourhood the Dnieppr is joined by its most important upper tributaries. It early became populous and prosperous, and was the first capital of Russia. The historian

Kliuchevski affirms that 'the common people still remember and know Old Kieff, with its princes and heroes, with its St. Sophia and Pechersk Monastery, unfeignedly love and revere it, as they have neither loved nor revered any of the capitals that succeeded it, Vladimir-on-Kliazma, Moscow, or Petersburg. About Vladimir they have forgotten, and, indeed, knew it but little in its own day. Moscow pressed heavily on the people. They respected her a little and feared her a little, but did not love her sincerely. Petersburg they neither love, nor respect, nor even fear.'

It was at Kieff in the tenth century that Prince Vladimir, after his marriage with Anne, the sister of the Greek Emperor, converted all the people to Christianity by a wholesale baptism, and by declaring all recalcitrants enemies of Jesus Christ and the Grand Duke. Already in the twelfth century it boasted four hundred churches, several of which had gilded cupolas. But it was stormed and sacked by Russian forces in 1169, by nomad hordes in 1203, and by the Tartars under Batu Khan in 1240. Shortly afterwards Plano Kirpin, a Papal emissary to the Khan's Court, passed through Kieff on his way from Poland. 'When we entered Russian soil,' he says, 'we saw a count-







less number of human skulls and bones on the steppe. Before, Kieff was very great and populous, but now there are scarcely two hundred houses in it.' When the Lithuanians drove off the Tartars, the liberty of the town was not restored. In the fifteenth century Casimir of Poland forbade the construction of Russian churches in what was the holy Mother City of all the towns in Russia. Only in 1686 was it incorporated in the Muscovite empire.

It is now the seventh city in the Tsar's dominions, and a fortress of first rank. From two to three miles broad, it stretches for ten miles along the Dniepr on the high right bank, which in several places is broken up by wide, deep ravines. So spacious are its boundaries that within them it could contain at least three times its present population. It is composed of four distinct parts. Podol, the business quarter, lies to the north-east, on low ground by the river. On rising ground to the south-west is Lipti, 'the place of lime-trees,' a delightful residential suburb with white-walled, green-roofed villas and shady gardens. North of Lipti is Old Kieff, the centre of the town, with elegant streets and handsome public buildings. Here are the theatre, the

University, the Museum with a fine collection of Scythian work, and the ruins of the Golden Gate, which was in ancient times the principal entrance. Here, too, is the St. Sophia Cathedral, the most interesting building in Kieff. It was erected at the beginning of the eleventh century in memory of a victory won over the nomad Petchenégues, but its real construction has been disguised externally by later additions. It is of quadrangular shape, with fifteen golden domes. In the inside the walls are covered with mosaics on a gold background, and old frescoes which call up memories of St. Mark's at Venice. More interesting, however, are the frescoes that adorn the walls of the great stair, which was once outside the building and led to the Grand Duke's castle, but now mounts a tower to the gallery. These represent with a curious combination of subtlety and primitive simplicity mythical animals, hunting scenes, and people dressed in rich Byzantine costumes.

The fourth quarter lies to the south-east, and is called Petchersk, or the town of the grottoes. These are low, narrow galleries hollowed in the clay soil, with little square places that have served as monastic cells. Some of them have been used

as chapels. In the niches at the sides rest carefully swathed bodies of saints. It is interesting to go round these tombs with a peasant crowd escorted by a monk, and note the degree of reverence and amount of kopecks paid to each holy man. Perhaps the most favoured is John the Much Suffering, who lived, so the monk says, for thirty years buried up to his neck. He has been left in this uncomfortable position and his mitre-covered head alone protrudes above the earth. This is the most ancient and most venerated monastery in Russia. Nearly two hundred thousand pilgrims visit it every year, and its revenues exceed a million roubles. Immediately opposite the Holy Gate which leads into the great courtyard is the military arsenal. From the hill on which these buildings lie a long stair leads down to the river, and as one descends there is a splendid view of the yellow waters of the Dnieppr, spanned by a suspension bridge, and the plains beyond. But perhaps the best view-point is at the northern end of the wooded terrace near the bronze statue of St. Vladimir, the cross of which is illuminated at night by electricity and seen from immense distances over the steppe. From here a large part of the town is visible. Of recent years Kieff has attracted

less pious, if wealthier, visitors than the peasant pilgrims, by a hardly justified notoriety as a centre of pleasure and refined vice. Less ambitious grounds for comparison with Paris might be adduced from the fact that Kieff, too, echoes with country sounds in the early morning, when the market-places, especially the Bessarabka, are full of brightly-clad little Russian peasants selling country produce.

Set also on a river's hilly right bank is the town proper of Nijni Novgorod, at the confluence of the Oka with the Volga. It must be distinguished from the older and once mighty republic in the marshes—Lord Novgorod the Great—the power of which was indicated in the popular saying, 'Who can stand against God and Novgorod?' Nijni was founded in 1212 to oppose the aggressions of the Mordva and the Bulgars. About 1250 it won independence under its own princes, and was strongly fortified, but before the century was out not only were its walls and towers stormed, the city burned, and the inhabitants enslaved by Tartars, but it fell also under the suzerainty of Moscow. In later years it repelled attacks from Mordvas, from Cossacks, and from Stenka Razine's formidable buccaneers. But the most glorious

chapter in its annals is the part its citizens played in restoring national stability after 'the time of troubles' in the seventeenth century. Novgorod the Great was held by Swedes, Moscow Kremlin by Poles; both Tsar and Patriarch were prisoners, and the national leaders among the aristocracy were bought by foreign gold. Pirates and brigands pillaged town and country, sparing not even the churches; in more than one district famine drove the miserable people to cannibalism. Then the country was saved by a whole national movement shared in by gentry, clergy, and, not least, the peasants, and directed from Nijni. The monks of the Troitsa Monastery sent letters to the various towns still independent, and when these were read at Nijni, a butcher, Kouzma Minine, stepped forward and said: 'If we wish to save the Empire of Moscow, we must spare neither our lands nor goods; let us sell our houses and put in service our wives and children; let us look for a man who is willing to fight for the Orthodox Faith, and to march at our head.' Minine sought out Prince Pojharski and 'beat the ground with his forehead' before him, asking him to take command. The religious note of the expedition was emphasized by a three days' fast, which was ordained even for children at the breast.

Then Pojharski and Minine set out on their triumphant march to Moscow. Another famous deed was wrought at this time by a peasant, Ivan Soussanin. When Michael Romanoff was appointed Tsar, the Poles sent armed men to seize him, but these Soussanin led astray in the woods, and they killed him. His service is commemorated in Glinka's opera, 'Life for the Tsar.' To the butcher Minine and Prince Pojharski, a bronze monument was erected in the Red Place in Moscow after another great national movement, when in 1812, as in 1612, the Russian people rose to drive out foreign invaders from their land. It bears the following inscription: 'To the citizen Minine and the Prince Pojharski Russia with gratitude.' The Russians have a genius for these simple manly epitaphs calculated to make the patriot reader's heart throb with glorious memories and pride of country. Such is the phrase: 'Catharine the Second to Peter the First' on the equestrian statue by the Neva; or, 'Lord, bless Russia and the Tsar, save the fleet and Sebastopol,' Korniloff's dying words, engraved on his monument near the Malakhoff Hill. Equally terse and simple but less characteristically Russian is the phrase of Nicholas I. on the monument to Admiral Nievelski in Vladivostok: 'Where



once the Russian flag is raised, it must never be lowered,' but the original is crisper than the translation.

Nijni proper on the hill is divided into the Upper and Lower Bazaars. Catharine the Great was not impressed by the appearance of the town in her age. She thought it 'situated magnificently but built miserably.' But to-day, though not imposing, Nijni is a clean, pleasant place, with several good streets and many fine houses. From the river the ascent to the Upper Bazaar is made by steep zigzags. The top of the hill is occupied by the Kremlin, which in point of situation, though not otherwise, surpasses the fortress sanctuary in Moscow. It is surrounded by a wall from sixty to a hundred feet high, flanked with eleven towers, which winds down the green slope. From its topmost projecting corner is one of the finest views in Russia, whether in summer, when the Oka and Volga are covered by countless noisy, busy tugs, and long, slowly-moving barges, or on frosty winter nights, when the great snow levels on fettered rivers and on the plains lie obscure and silent under the stars. At such a time, save for the long temporary bridge, the fair-town on the low ground between the rivers is mostly unlit and deserted.



The fair lasts for only six weeks in July and August. It is divided into Inner and Outer Fairs, the former of which is little more than a mass of offices rented by the agents of important commercial firms. In the Outer Fair there is an enormous assortment of almost every article that the human mind can conceive, and separate blocks of buildings are assigned to each category. The fair will sadly disappoint those who expect to see at every turn pagans from Northern Siberia, Chinese, Buddhists, Tartars from Samarkand or Bokhara. Now that the railways thread Asia, though the actual turnover has not decreased, much of the former colour is lost. That is seen better in the fairs at places like Orenburg.

Odessa is the fourth city of the empire, the third being Polish Warsaw. Its origin was due to the fertile, if sometimes wayward, brain of Catharine II. The foundation-stone was laid in August, 1794. The town is built at the end of the Pontri steppes where they fall in broken declivities to the Black Sea. Near the site was an old Sarmatian colony called Odessus, which is mentioned by Arrion. Odessa is one of the best built and imposing cities in Russia. But unfortunately the sandstone most available for building purposes decays rapidly, and



A COUNTRY MAYOR OF THE TOULA DISTRICT



substantial houses, if left alone, become ruinous in a few years. For this reason, no doubt, only a mass of débris is left of the once prosperous Greek cities on the littoral. Stone for the pavements and larger edifices is brought from the quarries of Italy and Malta. After the bare steppes the eye is gratified, in the parks and boulevards, by numerous gardens and rows of trees, which are kept alive on the unsuitable ground only with the most unceasing care. The northern suburbs that border the steppes are dull and dusty, especially in late autumn, but towards the sea the wide straight streets, the elegant shops and great churches, need not fear comparison with the wealthiest and most advanced cities of Western Europe. Especially fine is the Boulevard Nikolayioski, lined on one side by magnificent buildings, and on the other by trees which are not close enough to prevent glimpses of the sea. In the middle of this promenade is a statue to the Duc du Richelieu, a French emigrant in Russian service who afterwards was a minister under Louis XVIII. He was Governor-General here from 1803-1814, and worked assiduously and successfully for the prosperity of the town. From the sea-front a staircase of massive masonry descends to the harbour. In

the fashionable and important quarters the prevailing style of architecture is Italian. The Italian colony, which dates from an early period, is numerous and influential. Nearly a third of the population, however, are Jews.

Russia is primarily an agricultural country, and there are few great cities. The ordinary provincial town offers very little of interest either in appearance or life. When the streets are paved, the cobbles are large and uneven. The houses are substantial, but have no architectural beauty. In the centre of each town is a Gostini Door, or Strangers' court, a building with long rows of low-roofed stores, where, with Oriental bargaining, a large proportion of the local business is transacted. For reckoning calculations the merchants use the *stchoti*, a wooden framework about a foot long, and scarcely so broad, with rows of balls strung on wires. Ragged and importunate beggars infest the steps of the numerous churches. The Government buildings are like the private houses, massive but plain, and often the most imposing of all is the railway-station. As builders, the Russians have strong claims to be regarded as the heirs of Rome. Not merely, nor, indeed, principally in Europe, but in Transcaspian Asia and in Siberian valleys their

structures seem raised not for an age but for all time. It is another question whether the millions lavished on the quays at Dalny might not have been more profitably expended at home. The most striking figures in the streets are sellers of kvass beverages, cloth and fruit, pit-marked nures with diadem-like *kokoshiks*, on their heads, uniformed policemen—of all Russians most harshly misjudged in this country—armed with sword and revolver, and in the evenings *dvorniks* or janitors. There is much dust and untidiness and general symptoms of *nostalgie de la boue*. In the principal thoroughfares stand lines of peasant cabmen or *izvostchiks* clad in warm *kaftans*. Fares are extraordinarily cheap, and one can drive a long distance for threepence. They are laid down by the town council and marked on the most obvious place in the vehicle, but these fixed prices are invariably disregarded, and the fare is bargained for before starting. This, though a small point in itself, is in full agreement with and may be used to illustrate a prominent feature of Russian life. ‘The Russian,’ said Herten with much truth, ‘of whatever station he be, avoids or breaks the law continuously wherever he can do so with impunity.’ A devotee to orderly system and precision would



receive more shocks in a week's stay in Russia than in a lifetime in Germany. Nor will the practical, humdrum Occidental be much comforted by the assurance that there are compensations in a club-like, genial spirit which pervades ; if the sceptic would only believe it, the whole people accept the confusion with imperturbable good-nature. The Slavophiles themselves cannot deny this trait of the national character, but explain it *more suo* by affirming that whereas Western Europe is ruled by external, Russia moves along the path of internal, order and justice.

Since the introduction of railways the country gentry have gone for the winter season not to their Government capital, but to Petersburg or Moscow. The increased facilities, however, of social and intellectual intercourse, and the existence and results of the revolution, have disturbed to some degree that 'eternal stillness' which hung over the provincial towns in days when we drove from their gates for three weeks on end without getting anywhere. But, on the whole, the standard of culture and intellectual interests is lower than in corresponding English cities, and in the smaller district towns the few really educated people that have drifted or been flung there by an unkindly



fortune are gradually drowned, as Tchekhoff says somewhere, like weeds, in the flood of littleness and commonness round them. Life in the prosperous commercial families is marked by extreme hospitality and unsophisticated material comfort, but by homeliness of manners and sterility of thought and conversation. Their chief amusements are card-playing, gossip and *goulaniyé*—that is to say, driving in the fashionable promenades. Few survivors remain nowadays of the old type of wealthy Russian merchant so admirably portrayed by the dramatist Ostrovski, illiterate, hard-headed, contemptuous of fashion, proud of his class, autocratic in his family, with an almost superstitious reverence of the *ikon* and the Tsar. Among his successors a not inconsiderable number have acquired a superficial polish in Paris and London, but have lost much in strength and energy.

Standing out from their drab surroundings are the representatives of the *intelligentia*, the real windows, as P. Struvé remarks, which let in light from Western Europe, the heirs of the Cossack tradition of stimulating popular struggle against the Government. This term is not applied to the educated classes as such. These include priests, officials, and the aristocracy, whereas the *intelli-*

*gentia* was middle-class, and distinguished by its hostility alike to State and religion. They were mostly professional people engaged in law, education, and medicine. Alone, they and the students who recruited their ranks never ceased to denounce and make war against the evils of bureaucratic government, and sacrifice unsparingly money and life in the cause of popular reform. Themselves, professedly non-religious, their mission with its long roll of martyrs took on the note of a religious crusade, and this was accentuated not only by their terminology, often reminiscent of the works of the Fathers, but to a greater extent by their unworldliness, asceticism, fervour, and purity of moral life. A critic was actually struck by the echoes of Orthodox psychology in the wild speeches of the Second Duma Left. And for this unequal struggle, and their services in wresting a constitution, the defects in the character of both students and 'intelligents' were overlooked or condoned. Their culture and knowledge were of a limited nature. By culture they understood not creative art, but either such things as canals and bridges, or the diffusion of knowledge among the uneducated peasants. They produced practically no literature. Their atheism was not the result of

mental and spiritual wrestling, but imposed by traditions and lightly assumed. They had no interest in philosophy, and despised metaphysics. Abstract principles they denied altogether. They held that life has no objective meaning, and that evil being the result merely of social mistakes can be reformed by purely external measures. Hence the more consistent 'intelligents' permitted the use of all means, including hooliganism and murder, leading to the desired end—the material prosperity of the people. Their traditions choked individuality, and yet neither as a class nor personally were they disciplined. Deficient in historical training, they formed their misty schemes with grandiose visions of popular aspirations and risings, and with a pathetic confidence in the possibility of political miracles, which the revolution rudely dispelled once for all.

In speaking of the work and character of the *intelligentia*, I have used the past tense, though the term survives, and will survive to active use, for this reason. In both aims and nature, Russian observers agree that vital changes have entirely modified the old type, which can hardly be regarded as longer existing. Profoundly disappointed and disillusioned with the results of the

revolution, which they almost entirely directed, they fell from their soaring heights to depths of dejection, from which they have not yet risen. At the same time their moral fibre was slackened. The abolition of the censorship opened the sluice gates to a veritable flood of pornographic and sensational literature. Politically, again, the October Manifesto cancelled all reason for the peculiar nature of their activity. Public opinion finds utterance in the Imperial Duma. But among the advanced middle-class liberals, many of the virtues and shortcomings of the *intelligentia* will undoubtedly survive. And though Russian Christian observers think otherwise, as may be readily imagined, and though—which is a rather more important matter—history warns us that such *volte-faces* are far from impossible, it is especially difficult to believe that they will change their attitude towards a discredited and discarded religion.



A POLISH JEW



## CHAPTER XXIX

### WHITE RUSSIA

WHITE Russia is the name given to the upper basin of the Dniepr, bounded on the south by the River Pripet, and on the north by the Eastern Dvina. The name is said to allude to the colour of the peasant dress. The four Governments of Vitebsk, Smolensk, Mogilyeff, and Minsk, occupy about a twentieth part of European Russia, and the population numbers over seven millions, of whom five are White Russians. The rest is made up of Great Russians, Jews, Poles, and Lithuanians. Here the purest Slavonic type is preserved. They have not blended with other stocks, as the Great Russians with the Finns and the Little Russians with the Mongolians. The Tartars came no farther west than Smolensk, and from Poland and Lithuania the only immigrants were noblemen, and these were few.

The earliest inhabitants of the country were of Finnish race. These were ousted by Lithu-



anians, and they in their turn receded before three Slavonic tribes that moved north from the foothills of the Carpathians. Settling in their new homes, these fresh-comers occupied themselves with agriculture, hunting, and trade. Excavations of their *kurgans*, or barrows, have shown that they had already mastered the rudiments of civilization. In the Kieff hegemony they maintained their own princes, and towns like Smolensk and Potolsk were from an early period wealthy and populous centres of commerce. In the thirteenth century, however, the Tartars swarmed into Kieff, and White Russia, rent by internal dissension, could no longer withstand the pressure of Lithuania, but became voluntary subjects of their vigorous neighbours to the west. The subjection was not looked upon as a conquest, and the Lithuanians, still pagan and uncivilized, took on the White Russian religion and culture. But these happy relations were broken off after the marriage of the Polish Princess, Hedwig, and Vagailo of Lithuania in 1387. One of the terms of this match insisted on the adoption by Lithuanian King and people of the Catholic faith. The introduction of Polish influence affected adversely the position of the Russian peasantry.

The White Russian language had no longer any official status. There followed all the ferocity of religious persecution, and the Polish seigneurs inaugurated a system of serfdom much more oppressive than was ever felt in Central Russia. Under these miserable conditions masses of the peasants fled to the unoccupied steppe, and the rest, as a Polish writer notes, 'prayed to God that Moscow should come.' It was only in the seventeenth century, however, that Moscow won suzerainty over the northern districts, and only at the end of the eighteenth was the whole of White Russia annexed to the Great Russian empire. At the date of the emancipation, the country had not recovered from the Polish régime. Harrowing and well authenticated descriptions are given of the prevailing poverty. As corn-laden barges moved along the Dvina to Riga, it was no uncommon sight to see hundreds of starving half-naked creatures who knelt on the banks praying for bread, and threw themselves on the food flung to them, and tore at it like wild beasts. To-day White Russia is one of the poorest and most backward parts of the empire.

In the north the scenery is of the Great Russian type, though the land occasionally rises into hilly

ground. But in the low flats of the south the wet country known as Poliesk, or 'the forest region,' the traveller, however unobservant, is struck by certain peculiar features. It was once apparently all one vast lake which drained into the Dniepr, but the outlet becoming choked, the stagnant water formed the marshes characteristic of this part of White Russia. Even now when more than six million acres have been reclaimed by drainage, some of them extend continuously for over two hundred miles. In the upper Pripet basin the woods are everywhere full of countless little channels which creep through a wilderness of sedge. Along the right bank of the Pripet rises above the level, and is fairly thickly populated. Elsewhere extends a great intricate network of streams with endless fields of water-plants and woods. For the most part Poliesk is oppressively dreary. In the drier spots the earth is carpeted with meadow saffron and asphodel. But over the bogs vapours hang for ever, and among these reeds in autumn there is no fly, nor mosquito, nor living soul, nor sound, save the rustle of their dry stalks. No scene is more characteristic of the inhabited places than the infinitely melancholy picture, often witnessed from

the train itself, of a grey-headed peasant cutting reeds, standing up to the waist in water.

The White Russian can be recognized without much difficulty. He is sturdy of figure and of middle height, not so broadshouldered or thick-set as the Great Russian, nor so tall and graceful as the Little Russian. He has not the dignity and vivacity of the former, nor the calm debonair bearing of the latter. On the whole, his thin face with the lightish brown hair, the fine-cut features, and the gentle glance of the grey or blue eyes leaves a favourable impression. His most characteristic garment is the white or light grey overcoat for both sexes, called *svitka*, which is girdled by a broad belt, and whose colour possibly gave the country its name. The peasants don this on all State occasions even in broiling summer days when they receive guests or pay visits or go to church. In winter it is worn over the sheepskin. Near the towns, however, factory-made goods are ousting home-spun cloths. In speech the White Russians are nearer akin to the Little than to the Great Russians. Where the latter use the letter *l* and *b* in the middle of words before a consonant or at the end of words they both use a short *u* sound. Thus, where the Muscovite says *volk* (wolf), the

Mogilyeff peasant says *vouk*. Unaccented *o* and *e* become *a*. Thus the literary word for 'head' *golová* is in the White Russian dialect *galavá*. Accented *o*, on the other hand, becomes often *ou* or *uo*; thus for *dom* (house), the White Russian says *duom*. The letters *t* and *d* of the official tongue are represented by sibilant sounds. *Teecho* (quietly), for example, becomes *tséecha*. There is no White Russian literature, and it is difficult to see the cogency of the arguments advanced by those who deplore that Great Russian alone is taught in the schools. In Little Russia the case is slightly different. There a literature has been produced, small in bulk, but of fine quality. But in both districts at the present day the speech of the people can be considered little more than a patois, and Imperial considerations must take precedence of sentimental.

The huts of the White Russians are generally isolated, and are as primitive and unornamented as those in the forests by the White Sea. The villages are small. One of more than a hundred and fifty houses is very rare, and hamlets of ten, or even five, are not infrequent. The dirty yellow dilapidated roofs, the absence of gardens, the wretchedly-built outhouses and hovels themselves,

all suggest an atmosphere of poverty. The peasants naturally seek higher pay elsewhere, and White Russians especially are employed in the hard, comparatively unremunerative, railway and river work. Thus in more than one respect White Russia is the empire's 'Ireland.' No one who has ever read it can rid his mind of an infinitely sad picture drawn by the poet Nekrasoff of one of these workmen bent over a shovel with sunken eyes, bloodless lips, and feet swollen by long standing in the water. The struggle for existence in this country has made the inhabitants in money matters careful and close-fisted to a degree far removed from the free and easy generosity of the Great Russian temperament. Intimately connected, too, with their poverty is the besetting vice of drunkenness, perhaps more prevalent here than in any district of the empire. This weakness is mercilessly exploited by the Jews, who in many places hold in their hands absolutely everything, and whose abuse of their power causes one to understand, if not sympathize with, the hostility that, together with religious prejudice, finds expression in the *pogroms*. The level of education is low. In White Russia there are no intellectual classes. Everyone who has passed the secondary schools seeks refuge else-



where. There are but few factories and works, which profoundly accelerate the mental, if not moral, development of Russian peasants, and those that do exist are managed by Jews or Germans. There is no single big administrative or cultural centre, and in three Governments there is no *zemstvo*. The great bulk of the landlords are Poles, who are out of touch with, and despise, the peasants. All these causes contribute to retard intellectual progress.

In this backward state of the White Russians it is natural that the economic and religious ideas of a former age still obtain. Thus the 'big family' system, nowhere surviving in Great Russia, is still common here in spite of adverse conditions, such as the impoverishment of the people and an ever-increasing scarcity of land and difficulty in finding work. A 'big family' sometimes comprises fifteen adult males and thirty or even fifty members. The head of the household, called *batska* by the grown-up men and women, and *dyadska* by the children, directs the common labour, controls the money, and looks after the behaviour of the family generally. He is the counterpart of the Servian *domachin* and the Great Russian *bolshak* or 'big one.' He is surrounded with marks of respect.





TEA-SELLERS AT A COUNTRY RAILWAY STATION



At table he sits in the place of honour in the corner under the *ikons*. Before bread is broken he says grace. At the other end of the table is the mistress's place. On one side sit the women and on the other the men, in places of seniority. The first to eat is the master of the house, and the others begin to eat in order after him. He plays the most important part at festivals, especially at the times when honour is paid to the dead. It is he who summons their souls to the meeting, pours out wine for them, and sets it on the window-sill for them to quench their thirst by night. Nowadays, however, his power is more limited than formerly. Unfairness, inexperience, idleness or drunkenness, lead to the dissolution of the family, or the transference of the mastership to a younger member. When a son complains of his father to the village council, generally the father's side is taken. But often both are punished, the son because he does not obey orders, the father because he cannot enforce them.

To the family frequently belong the daughters' husbands, in cases where these are poor. But this position is not considered enviable: a rhyming proverb says that their portion is as the portion of a dog. When there are sons, a daughter does not theoretically receive land. In practice, however.

there is often a formal agreement, and an industrious shrewd son-in-law comes to have as much influence as any of the original members. Occasionally the family adopts entire strangers through lack of working hands or capital. By bringing his property and labour to the household, the new-comer and his family acquire a right on its movable and immovable goods. In this way landless peasants obtain land. The position of the White Russian woman is good, unless she be a widow with young children in an unbroken family. They have their own private property apart from the common wealth, the dowry, which, however, is seldom in money, and is added to by poultry-keeping or personal work. As with the Great Russians, though neither people is indifferent to the charms of female beauty, marriages are settled less for romantic than for economical reasons, less for a pretty face than 'golden hands.' They have, however, a proverb: 'Take not her who is covered with gold; take her who is clothed in wisdom.'

Amid all the dirt, squalor, and poverty, there is, however, much that is attractive and even picturesque. Such, for example, are the ceremonies at the festival of Ivan Kupalo on the mysterious night between the 23rd and 24th of June, with the pro-

cessions, the wheels burning on high poles, and the blazing bonfires. In many districts on the same night honour is paid to the Rusalka, or female Water Spirit. The young unmarried women choose a Rusalka from their company, and also a little girl, who is called the Rusalka's daughter. They crown them with garlands. They also make a straw figure in the likeness of a man. Then the Rusalka with dishevelled hair casts off her clothes, or remains in a shift only, and leads the band to a lonely place singing, 'I will bring the Rusalka to the forest, but I myself will return home. I will bring the Rusalka, aye, to the dark forest, but I will return to my father's court.' They gather the dry brushwood to make a fire. Then they throw the straw figure upon it, leap round and across the flames, and sing the Kupalo songs. There are countless analogies, such as Adonis and Astarte, to this mid-summer pair of dieties, Kupalo and the Rusalka, that stand for powers of vegetation and fertility generally.

The marriage ceremonies are peculiarly intricate, and bear distinct traces of the system of capture as well as purchase. Thus when the matchmakers approach the bride's parents, they inquire, after preliminary conversation on general topics, whether

their hosts have a heifer to sell. If their suit is considered favourably, they are told that there is one for sale if there were merchants. Again, after everything is settled, when the groom pays his formal visit to the girl, he takes a company of his friends and drives up noisily to her house. But there they are at first refused entrance as if they came on a hostile errand, and only after bargaining and promises of 'fairing' are the courtyard gates opened. Of the many curious and instructive burial customs, one or two may be mentioned here. As the cart with the dead man's daughters sitting weeping on the coffin passes a house, the master of which was on bad terms with the deceased, he comes outside, kneels on the ground, and takes up a pinch of dust, which he shakes in direction of the funeral, saying, 'You were a good man. This I give to you.' That is to pacify his enemy's spirit that he may not do him harm from his now powerful position among the dead. In the grave are often put tobacco, bread, and vodka, to cheer the soul in its loneliness, and candles to light the dark path in the other world. If the grave is already occupied, money is put in it so that the dead man may buy a place for himself, and not be in danger of ejection. He takes with him also



means for his sustenance, a carpenter his axe or a musician his instrument.

In the life of this uneducated and imaginative people, ghosts, bogles, and spirits, naturally play an important part. Their worst foes are the Wood-One, with his enormous height, his loud voice, and blazing eye, and the shaggy Water-One, with his great beard and green hair. These, together with all their male and female progeny, are manifestations of that Unclean Power which is ever about the White Russian's path and about his bed, and spieth out all his ways. In fact, to see the Devil you have only to spit thrice in a strong wind and say, 'Devil, Devil, show your tail!' Illnesses are also signs of the Devil's forces. They are nearly all personified. The fever that haunts the dwellers in Poliesk is an ugly old woman who creeps up to the sleeper and kisses him, and will not part from him. But then, she may be tricked in various ways. Once a sick man expecting her visit pretended to be dead. He lay down under the *ikons* and bade his relatives weep for him. When the fever came and saw them weeping, she believed him dead, and went away. You may also frighten her, for instance, by firing a gun over the invalid, for she is a great coward. Even after an illness has laid her hand



on a man, she may often be driven out if you adopt bold enough measures. You may, for example, place the sick man face downwards on the threshold, and jump three times on his back. Death, the other world, and transmigration of souls into stones, animals, and so on, are regarded from a curiously realistic standpoint. There is one White Russian story which illustrates the folly of extravagant lamentation over the dead. Once there died a girl whom her mother loved dearly. The mother wept long and bitterly, and desired much to see her dead daughter. So the neighbours advised her to go to church at night on the festival of All Souls. She did so, and on the stroke of midnight she saw her daughter hauling after her with great exertion a barrel full of tears. From that time the mother wept no more.

In addition to the evil spirits there are others who, if propitiated, show favour. First among these are the House-spirits, to whom the peasants pray: 'O Tsar Domovoi, O Tsaritsa Domovitsa, with our little children we beg your favour to feast with us.' Each of the outhouses is in the guardianship of a kindly spirit. At every turn traces of the worship of water, fire, and earth are evident. No White Russian will spit into the fire, and few

housewives will lend fire to their neighbour, lest the luck of the home go with the embers. When a family moves to a new house, they carry with them ashes from the old. They take, too, a clod of earth. As the Smolensk peasants say, 'Such earth is useful for the health. You go to another strange little country: there the climates are other, there even the water for our brother can do great harm. But strew your own little earth on the water, and then no land can do aught.' The Godhead for the White Russian is of many persons. St. Illya looks after the thunder, St. Eury wild beasts and cattle, St. Froll horses, St. Nicholas the corn-lands. A peasant was asked as to the number of persons in the Godhead. He replied: 'God knows how many Gods there are. The chief, we must suppose, is one, and Jesus Christ is his son. But the Holy Spirit is not God, but God's spirit.'

Wise men and women possess great power in the lonely villages among the marshes and forests. They are generally people who live in some isolation, such as millers. They have given their souls to the Devil. The peasants show them great respect, forbearing even to mention their names among themselves. One may know a wizard as

follows: Take a bit of the cheese which is eaten before Easter, and carry it in a little bag under the armpit all through the Fast. Then at the Easter midnight service, when the priest proclaims, '*Christós voshréss*'—that is to say, 'Christ has risen'—you must whisper after the pope, 'I have cheese,' whereupon all the wizards in the church will come up and ask for it. Only it is not wise to give it to them.

Conditions are changing fast in White Russia. Year by year decreases the number of those old-fashioned villages, where there is neither samovar nor kerosine, and where no one can read or write. The people are becoming conscious of the need and benefits of education. And though there is still much ignorance and wretchedness, one may feel assured that as the draining of the marshes has expelled those agues and fevers which made the White Russian prematurely an old man, so the constant multiplication of schools will effect, in the not distant future, a steady progress in material and intellectual development, and enable this part of the Russian race to occupy a higher place than it does at present in the national life.



A DANCE IN LITTLE RUSSIA



## CHAPTER XXX

### LITTLE RUSSIA

To the south and south-east of White Russia lie the three Governments of Tchernigoff, Poltava, and Kharkoff, which constitute the romantic and fascinating country known as 'Little Russia,' a country where, as Count Aleksai Tolstoy wrote with glowing enthusiasm, 'everything breathes of plenty, where the rivers flow brighter than silver, where the gentle steppe wind rustles the grasses, and the farm buildings are lost in cherry groves.' The name originated in the fourteenth century to distinguish the land round Kieff from the Great Russia, whose centre was Moscow. The other title given to this district, the Ukraine, means properly 'the border,' or 'the frontier,' a term one might have expected to accompany the expansion of Russian territory in every direction, but associated once for all with Little Russia, which was for centuries the border with Poland. The population of the three Governments numbers nearly



eight millions, and the density is considerably greater than is the average rural district in the rest of the empire. In the course of their history the Little Russians have become blended with Mongolian and Turkish stocks, not only through the women seized in Cossack forays, but also by the peaceful absorption, at an early date, of settlers, left by the nomadic peoples on the steppe. But here also, as in Great Russia, it is the Slav blood that predominates.

In appearance and character the Little Russians present many interesting points of contrast with their Northern kinsfolk. They are less muscular and massively built, but more finely proportioned and taller. The average Little Russian has grey or brown eyes and brown hair, which in old times was shaved off, with only one long lock left on the crown. This gave rise to the Great Russian nickname 'tufts,' to which the Little Russian retaliated with the epithet 'goats,' in allusion to the flowing Muscovite beard. But nowadays the tuft and the long drooping moustaches are seldom seen except in out-of-the-way villages. A holiday crowd in Little Russia is marked by gay and harmonious colours. The men are clad in flaming red trousers and blue *shupan*, or coat, the women in green



woollen jackets, which are sleeveless and ornamented with bright patterns of checkwork. The width of the men's trousers still faintly recalls the days when they were 'as broad as the Black Sea.'

The Little Russian character is not marked by the energy, the practical shrewdness, the enormous vitality, of the North. There is something less vigorous and softer in it which corresponds with the milder southern skies. The very movements, except in the dance, are slow, and even lazy. No more typical Little Russian scene can be imagined than a peasant pacing languidly and leisurely along the steppe road by a hayladen cart drawn by musk-coloured oxen and urging them sleepily on—' *Tsob-Tsob-Tsobáy.*' When he listens to a humorous story that would send the Great Russian into fits of hearty laughter, not even the tips of his moustaches tremble. In the absence of real strength of will is often met an unreasoning obstinacy. To family bliss or misfortune the Little Russian is peculiarly sensitive. He loves to sit with a neighbour over a bottle of vodka and philosophize tearfully on the mysteries and troubles of life. In grit and resolution the women are much superior to the men. They figure abnormally high in the list of criminals.

They are frequently the heads of families. Formal divorce is hardly known yet in Little Russia, but in such cases the female is hardly ever the wronged or downtrodden party. Anyone at all familiar with this country must be struck by the force of character in the women's faces. Their general position is one of remarkable freedom. Over a large part of the country the married women set aside Mondays as a day for themselves, on which they work for their own profit, have parties, or sew a dowry for their daughters. In the choice of marriage partners the young people enjoy an independence unknown in Great Russia, and hence there is room for a considerable degree of courtship and romance. The parents confine themselves to the sensible caution: 'Choose a bride not with your eyes, but with your ears.'

In religious belief nominally they are almost all Orthodox, and this unanimity has been ascribed, perhaps fancifully, to the persecutions suffered under Polish rule. But as a matter of fact a salient feature in the Little Russian character is scepticism. House-spirits and water-nymphs inevitably people the villages and shady ponds. Generally, however, in spite of a comparatively low intellectual standard, there is a striking absence of superstitious

fancies. The people attach no importance to religious dogmatism of any kind. There are practically no old believers and no sectarians—a sure sign of religious indifference. For rationalistic propaganda, however, they do not offer a fertile field; their nature is too dreamy and poetical. Thus Bielinski's remarks, quoted above, while admittedly questionable with regard to the overwhelming majority of the Russian peasants, are only partially true of the Little Russians.

Psychologically the most prominent feature, however, is their æsthetic taste, which stamps itself on every aspect of Little Russian life. Its presence is felt in their literature in a refined and restrained imaginativeness which has no parallel in the Great Russian works, careless as a whole of everything but force and truth. It lies like a delicate bloom over their songs. The old *dumas* as compared with the northern *bylinas* have less verve, less epic dignity, less sweeping breadth. They are more lyrical and romantic. They tell especially of the Cossack's parting with mother or sweetheart, his sufferings in Tartar captivity, and his longing for home and children, and of that other hero of the Steppe, the *tchoumak*, or caravaner, who went for salt and fish to the Black Sea and the Sea of Asoff

facing sand-storm and snow-storm, aroused every morning by cockerow from his first waggon, and over whom if he died on the solitary Steppe his fellows reared a little *kurgan*. Among the thousands of Little Russian songs, somebody has said there are few that would make a young girl blush and many that would make her weep. The naïve sentimentality of this remark—the critic was surely a Russian or at least a Slav—contains a large measure of truth. Most of these airs indeed are melancholy, full of an unsatisfied indefinable craving for something beyond mortal reach, and a tender sorrow, whose expression, however, has in it more of conscious art and less of the real human suffering that chokes the songs of the Great Russians. The *dumas* can be heard no longer. The race of old blind *kobzars*—the *kobza* was like a guitar—have passed away for ever, just as the singers of the *brilina*. In both cases, however, a large proportion of their themes has been rescued by antiquarian research. The place of the *kobzars* is now taken by *lirniki*, who enliven the horse fairs with more recent compositions or satirical ditties on the events of the day.

But the æsthetic temperament of the Little Russians is seen also in their material surroundings

and ordinary life. From this source springs their pleasure in pacing up and down their gardens, dreamily admiring the sunset or the cherry blossom. These charming gardens, full of cherry, apple, and pear trees, are frequent in every village, and sometimes they enclose even apricot-trees and vines. Amid their bright whites and reds stands the hut with its trim straw roof and walls of plaited wickerwork covered by a thick layer of light-coloured clay. Some villages are composed of both Great and Little Russian houses, and no more glaring contrast can be imagined. Quite foreign to the Little Russian taste are their neighbour's untidiness, sameness, and dirt, and the whole spirit reflected in the Scottish proverb, 'the clartier, the cosier.' The interior of the *izba* is as clean as the outside. The floor, walls, ceiling, and stove are of evenly-moulded clay, and all shine spotlessly white. There are lines of *ikons*, for, however indifferent to their religious signification, the Little Russians love the black and gold colours of these 'gods.' Gaily patterned towels hang round the room, and the shelves are bright with crockery. On the window-sill are flower-pots. The table is invariably covered with a white cloth, on which is a loaf, or at least a crust of bread. Many houses have a 'but' as well

as a 'ben.' Life is not so easy now as in the days when Count Tolstoy was struck by its atmosphere of plenty. Land is scarce. Masses of the people have emigrated to settlements in Siberia. On the whole, however, conditions are comfortable, and rarely is the summer table set without the favourite dishes of pork and fruit. Very different are the salt steppes of the Kalmucks, where, as the saying goes, even the bug is food.

Little Russia lies on a gentle slope which descends towards the marshes of Poliesk in the west and the steppes in the south. Like the Central Black-earth districts, it comprises three divisions: the wooded uplands of Tchernigoff to the Diesna, thence forest-steppe to the Vorskla, and south of that river the steppes proper. In the third region the climate is continental, but in the northern districts the winter, though long, is not severe, and there are frequent thaws, while the summer, for all its drought and heat, is yet neither leaden or burdensome. The charm of its lazy fragrant sleepiness is reflected with poetic sympathy, exquisite colour, and unexaggerated fidelity, in the opening passage of Gogol's first story:

'How intoxicating, how luxurious is a summer day in Little Russia! How languishingly hot are







BLESSING THE GROUND BEFORE SOWING : LITTLE RUSSIA

those hours when midday shimmers in quiet and sultriness, and the blue immeasurable ocean of the sky, bent vault-like and voluptuously over the earth, seems to be asleep! All steeped in passion he clasps his beautiful one in close aery embrace. There is no cloud on him, no murmur on the plain—everything is as it were dead. Only above in the depths of heaven a lark trembles, and its silvery song flies down aerial steps to the enchanted earth, and from time to time the cry of a gull, and the clear note of a quail is echoed over the steppe. Lazy, with never a thought—like aimless revellers—stand the cloud-piercing oaks, and the blinding strokes of the sunbeams illumine whole marvellous masses of leaves, while on others they fling a shadow dark as night, so that only in strong gusts of wind will they shiver with gold. Like emeralds, topazes, and sapphires, ethereal insects float over the many-coloured gardens shaded by the stately sun-flowers. Grey ricks of hay, and golden stooks of wheat, are set together as in camps over the cornland, or wander like nomads over its immensity. Broad boughs of cherry, plum, apple, and pear trees, bent under the weight of their fruits; the sky and its bright mirror; the river, in green proudly-raised frame—how full of

tenderness, of abandonment, is the Little Russian summer!

The country is poor in mineral wealth, which is not found nearer than the basin of the Don. But for agriculture, nothing could equal the decayed vegetable matter, known as black earth, which covers, with a thick layer of several feet, a dangerous subsoil of loose sand. Clover and lucerne attain astonishing heights, and single stalks of hemp stretch up for twenty feet. The peasants fear little save the visitations of locusts, and the spring floods that sometimes wash away wide tracts of plough-land and leave gaping ravines in the fields. Isolated from the village are the *khutors*, or farms, surrounded by thick gardens with scores of hives, for in Little Russia the bee is almost a household pet. Round about range sheep-pens and cattle-sheds—the field work is done almost entirely with oxen. And beyond them, and as far as the eye can reach, is a waving sea of yellow corn. The villages, on the other hand, lie for the most part by winding silvery rivers or long dreamy lakes, whose banks in spring are covered with endless beds of crocuses and hyacinths. In the glamour of still summer evening the Ukraine is extraordinarily beautiful. It

pervades Pushkin's 'Poltava' with a magic charm. The straw roofs shine like gold, and the walls like silver; the reaches of the river gleam under the moonlight, and the air is balmy and steeped in the scents of flowers and cornland. With the passage which I have quoted above, describing a sultry noon, may be compared another from the same inexhaustible gallery, where the unerring sureness of touch makes one vividly conscious of the fragrance and freshness of late evenings:

'Do you know the Ukraine night? Oh, you do not know the Ukraine night? Gaze upon it! From the middle of the sky the moon looks round her; the infinite dome of heaven spreads out and stretches itself still more infinite; it glows and draws breath. All the earth is in silver light; wonderful is the air, at once cool and sultry and full of softness, and setting in movement a tide of fragrance. O night divine! Enchanting night! The woods stand motionless and fascinated, full of gloom and flinging far their gigantic shadows. Quiet and calm are these ponds; the chill and darkness of their waters are held grimly in the murky green walls of the gardens. The virgin groves of hayberries and wild cherry-trees stretch out their roots timidly

into the coolness of spring wells, and ever and again their leaves lisp, as if angry and protesting when that fair fickle courtier, the night breeze, steals up in a flash and kisses them. All the landscape is asleep! But above in the sky everything is breathing; everything is marvellous, everything is sublime. And in one's soul, too, is illimitable space and wonder, and crowds of graceful silver visions rise up in its depths. O night divine! Enchanting night! And suddenly everything awakes, woods and ponds and steppe. The Ukraine nightingale pours forth his swelling music, and you fancy that the moon herself listens entranced to him in mid-heaven. . . . Quiet, as if bewitched, the village slumbers on the height. Still whiter, still more beautiful in the moonlight, shine the groups of huts; still more blinding do their low walls stand out of the gloom. Hushed are all songs. Everything is at rest. Pious folks are already asleep. Only here and there are narrow little windows lit; only here and there on their thresholds is a belated family finishing the evening meal.

But there is one more feature of the country about which I have said nothing. As one drives through the cornfields on dusty, windless days in

autumn, when the air is laden with heavy odours, one is conscious suddenly of a coolness in the atmosphere. That comes from the Dniepr. Ere long its stream is revealed to the gaze, stretching out as calm as the sky and as vast as the sea, and in a moment one forgets dust and heat and weariness. For six hundred miles this historic and magnificent river forms the Eastern boundary as it flows toward the Black Sea from its marshy source in northern White Russia. In the parching steppes it would be hard to conceive anything more impressive. One feels no surprise that it has so powerfully affected the Little Russian imagination, and inspired great works of art—pictorial like those of Cuindji, or literary like this sublime passage of Gogol, where enthusiasm can scarcely contain itself:

‘Wonderful is the Dniepr in calm weather, when his brimming flood moves freely and smoothly through the woods and hills. He does not ripple; he does not roar. You look and you do not know whether his majestic breath is moving or not; and you fancy that he is all a sheet of glass, or that it is a blue mirror-like road of immeasurable breadth and endless length that flows winding over the green world. Pleasant, then, is it



for the hot sun to gaze from the heights and plunge his rays into the coolness of the glassy waters, and pleasant, too, for the woods on the banks to be imaged brightly in the stream. The woods with their green wavy branches! They crowd together, along with the field flowers, at the edge of the water, and bending over gaze into it and have never their fill of gazing, never their fill of delight in their own bright reflection; they smile to it and greet it, nodding their boughs. But in the midstream of the Dnieppr they dare not look; into that nothing peers save the sun and the blue sky; few are the birds that fly to the midstream of the Dnieppr. Glorious river! There is no river like him in the world.

‘Wonderful, too, is the Dnieppr on a warm summer night, when everything is lulled to sleep, man and beast and bird, and God alone majestically surveys heaven and earth, and majestically makes His raiment to shake. From it are the stars poured, the stars that blaze and gleam over the world, and that all are reflected in the Dnieppr, every one together. Every one the Dnieppr holds in his dark breast; not one escapes him, save only it be extinguished in heaven. The dark wood strung with sleeping ravens, and the hoary



shattered hills that overhang him, strain every effort to hide him if but by their long shadow—in vain! There is nothing in the world that could cover the Dnieppr. Blue, blue he flows with even flood through the night as through the day, visible as far as human eye can see. Shrinking delicately from the cold of night he hugs the banks, and there gleams a silver stream that flashes as the blade of a Damascus sword, and then once more his blue waves fall asleep. Then too wonderful is the Dnieppr, and there is no such river in the world.'

## CHAPTER XXXI

### THE STEPPE

IN the south of Little Russia commence the grassy treeless plains that stretch to the Black Sea and the Caspian, and that from the dawn of history have formed a pasture-ground for the flocks of nomad peoples. Over their unbroken expanses have wandered in succession Scythians, Sarmatians, Goths, Hunns, Khasars, and at last, about the sixth century of our era, came settlers, certain Slavonic tribes that moved down the Western rivers, some of whom burnt while others buried their dead. But almost from the beginning these were exposed to the constant raids of light-mounted Turkish nomads, and later on a more formidable race named Polovtsi. The old chronicles reflect with a certain bald grimness the dangers and difficulties that surrounded the colonist's life. 'In spring the peasant will ride out to plough, and the Polovtchin will come, strike the peasant with an arrow, take his horse, then ride into the village,



A CIRCASSIAN



seize his wife and children and his goods, and set fire to barn and all.' Under this endless and hopeless struggle the steppes became gradually depopulated. The settlers fled to the north behind barriers of natural and artificial fortifications, and only a few oases were left along the rivers of the Donet's basin. The desolation was completed by the Tartars. What remained of the population sought refuge in Muscovite Russia and the banks of the Vistula. The country became once more empty save for Mongolian watch-fires.

The recolonization of the western steppes was the immediate result of the social and religious oppression inflicted on their Russian subjects by Lithuania, and especially Poland. To escape from serfdom, the peasants fled in masses toward the uninhabited prairie, and in that rich but disturbed country the peculiar conditions of life bred a race of soldier-settlers. To these was given the Tartar name of 'Cossack,' which means, strictly, mounted guerilla troops. At the same time down the Don and the Volga, moved the discontented elements of Great Russia. All these formed armed bands that moved out into the steppe, and engaged in fishing, cattle-breeding, and agriculture. Thanks to them, the southern frontiers became more

secure. But in both districts the Governments pressed hard in their track. From the sixteenth century, Moscow began a systematic colonization of the steppe; and repressive measures had to be adopted to prevent the peasants flocking southward on their own accord, as the Chinese at the present day pour into Manchuria, threatening to 'celestialize' Vladivostock itself. Towards the west, colonization was due only indirectly to the Polish Government. Enormous tracts of the recovered land were granted to great seigneurs, who settled them with their serfs, promising these twenty or thirty years of absolute freedom. But the new inhabitants came into conflict with their predecessors, and the result was to send the free Cossack ever farther into the steppe, and to open ever wider districts of its fertile plain to the plough.

In the borderland between Slav and Turk, the Cossacks succeeded in forming free and powerful republics, in which the military features became accentuated. Their ranks were constantly swelled by peasants, debtors from higher classes, broken men whose lives were forfeit, and lovers of fighting, booty, and freedom. 'The Tsar,' said one of their proverbs, 'rules at Moscow, and the Cossack on the







CIRCASSIANS DRILLING

Don.' But the more civilized the empire became, the sharper was the contrast with the lawless braves of the steppe. Not only did their raids on Turk and Tartar cause bloody reprisals and diplomatic difficulties with the Sultan, but also they turned not infrequently against the Slavs themselves. Moscow, while all the time expanding through their service, now avowed them allies and brothers, now, when convenient, swore that they were subjects of the Turk. As the land became ever more settled, the points of difference became acuter, and at last the turbulence and dissatisfaction of the Cossacks found vent on a grand scale in the rising of Stenka Razine. To this day his name is enshrined with a magical halo in the songs of the Don that, together with reminiscences of Turkish forays and the capture of Azoff, tell of how he crossed the air on a carpet of felt, and changed into a fish to swim the Volga. Not till the time of Peter the Great were decisive measures taken for the pacification of the Don. Ten thousand Cossacks were then deported to the Ural and the Caucasus. In the Ukraine, at an early date, the Polish King endeavoured to introduce an invidious system of registration. Six thousand men were to receive pay, and be em-

ployed as irregular forces, while the rest were to be made once more serfs. This measure roused a storm of wrath among the Cossacks, and from that time their bickerings and chequered warfare with the kingdom to the west never ceased. When defeated, Poland agreed to enormous augmentations of the numbers of the free Cossacks; but occasionally she was victorious. Finally, in the seventeenth century, the Cossack hetmen appealed for protection to the Orthodox Tsar. Moscow acceded readily. The Cossack army was to be maintained at a strength of six hundred thousand men. They were to elect their own hetmen, and have full powers of local administration and receive foreign ambassadors, except from Poland and Turkey. But these new relations proved no more satisfactory than the old; and after Mazeppa's defection to the Swedes, though the mass of the Cossacks declared for the Tsar, Peter took the opportunity of curtailing their dangerous power. The Dnieppr Cossacks were banished to the Crimea, as the Don to the Caucasus. Under Anne they were allowed to return to their old home, but they found the changed and settled country sadly dull. It was not suited for them, nor they for it. Catharine took their stronghold,

confiscated their lands, and once more expelled them. The Ukraine became an integral part of Russia. With the annexation of the Crimea, their peculiar position in the European part of the empire was an anachronism. Among the Cossack communities in Southern Russia to-day, some of the former features still obtain. They provide horses and accoutrements for their military service at their own expense, but are not liable to direct taxation. Much of the old social equality is retained to the present day in the villages down the River Ural, where at the beginning of the fishing season mounted pickets are stationed along the banks to keep off not only poachers, but also children whose cries might frighten the fish. But it is especially on the southern frontier of Siberia, and as far east as the Amoor, that the Cossack life most nearly resembles the old conditions, and breeds a rude, vigorous race, admirably adapted for outpost duties and guerilla warfare.

Of all the Cossack bands none have equalled in fame or exploits the Ukraine Zaporoztians, or Cossacks 'beyond the rapids' of the Dniepr. In that remote and secure position they entrenched themselves on one of the islands scattered below the shelving ridges of rock that break the smooth

surface of the river. This fortified place, or Setch—the word is connected with *zasicka*, a forest clearing for military purposes—they changed altogether eight times. Men who cared for nothing else in the world had a filial regard for their Setch. When expelled by Peter and Catharine they took a clod of her earth to their new home, and whenever they rode out on forays or set sail in their pirate craft to swoop down on merchant vessels or harry seaboard towns in the Black Sea, all the Zaporoztians turned round before they were out of sight of the Setch and said: ‘Farewell, our mother! May God keep you from all misfortune!’ In war-time their ataman had power of life and death over his troops, but the Setch itself was like a great free republic or, as Gogol says, ‘a close ring of schoolboy friends.’ ‘The difference was only in this, that instead of sitting under the rule and rubbishy instructor of a schoolmaster, they made raid after raid on five thousand horses; instead of the meadow where schoolboys play at ball, they had infinite free expanses, where in the distance the swift-moving Tartar would show his head and the Turk glance stern and motionless in his green *tchalm*.’ In the constant expeditions from this island stronghold there is not lacking the religious





RETURNING FROM A HUNT IN THE CAUCASUS





note that runs like a coloured thread through all Russian history. Against Catholic, Mohammedan, and Jew, the Cossacks were a kind of Monastic Order that fought as defenders of the Faith. In election to the brotherhood the only questions asked of the newcomer were whether he believed in Christ and the Holy Trinity, and whether he belonged to the Orthodox Church ; the only request made was that he should sign himself with the Cross. Life in the Setch was full of a rich barbaric colour ; there were companies lodged apart and jealous as houses in a public school, rough conceptions of knightly honour, heroic drinking, sudden alarms of Tartar raids, elections of atamans, anointed with mud, terrible punishments for theft or murder, where the living were buried together with the dead ; there were horses and boats, dirt and rags and breeches of gorgeous purple, smeared ostentatiously with tar. But there was nothing more interesting than the men themselves, none of whom died a natural death, many cruel desperadoes, many wild spirits that found pleasure only in fighting, many that knew ' what Horace was, and Cicero and the Roman republic. . . . Lovers of a life of arms, of golden goblets, rich brocades, ducats and reals could at all times find work here. Here only

worshippers of women could find nothing, for even in the neighbourhood of the Setch not a single woman dared appear.' There is a fine picture by Repin of their composing a scurrilous message to the Polish King, and an immortal story by Gogol, which with unflagging spirits and a freshness and largeness, a vibrating sympathy and splendour of language hardly to be found outside Homer, describes the festival life in the Setch and the prowess of her stalwart sons abroad.

Not all the steppes—the Russian is pronounced *styaip*—are rich lands of black earth. There are wide expanses of sand, as at the mouth of the Dnieppr, and salt, as in the country north of the Crimea, and clay, as in the plains bordering the Caspian. In the fertile steppes, too, where the villages lie in ravines along the small rivers that are like Syrian wadies, the soil is gradually drying up. 'When man comes,' there is a saying, 'water goes.' It is this last type of steppe whose main features will be baldly enumerated here. In appearance it is practically the same as the veldt or the prairie, but scenery is largely looked at with the mental as well as the physical eye, and the steppe appeals to one with a force which neither the prairie nor even the veldt can exercise. It is indeed intimately con-

nected with the Russian history and literature. For miles in certain parts the level is strewn with bleached skulls that are the sole record of forgotten battles. You can see them from the train to Astrakhan lying in countless numbers like white stones. And to its fascination are due some of the finest word-pictures in the Russian language, like those of Gogol, or Levitoff, or Koltsoff, the Russian Burns, who, as a boy, herded cattle on the steppe. Characteristic of his work is a poem where a mower-lad sings of these boundless plains in their virgin beauty, of the scythe swishing through the swaths of grass, while the south wind blows cool in his face. From their even floor from time to time rise *kurgans*, some old forts or watch-places, others the barrows of nomad chieftains, such as ride through Vasnetsoff's canvases. Many of these have yielded valuable finds of an art influenced by Greek culture, and the steppe shepherds sometimes spend days on them in search of buried treasure, while their flocks dot the brown steppe white. And one will not drive far before meeting one of those curious figures, which the peasants call 'stone women,' made of stone not found nearer than four hundred miles, with their faces turned invariably to the east. Whoever left them, they have grown accustomed, one fancies, to

the lonely steppe. Many of them have been taken to adorn *khutor* gardens, but it needs ten strong bulls to tear them away and bring them to the farm, while a single yoke can convey them back. Superstitious peasants carry their sick children to them, kneel and embrace them, and offer wheat ears and kopecks. They and the *kurgans* alone break the expanse of the steppe. The roads are enormously wide, often hundreds of feet, and from them break off others that run mysteriously toward some village or *khutor*, hidden under the horizon, or lose themselves in the vastness.

At the present day little of the steppe remains virgin. But in spring it is covered with a carpet as wonderful as that which Marlowe saw spread under the Eastern conqueror's chariot-wheels. Amid the green growth are plants with bright flowers like poppies that colour broad distances red, blue, or yellow; and then, except that the grasses are lower, the steppe is for all the world like what it was when Taras Bulba and his sons rode through it, with their black Cossack hats alone seen above the verdure on their way to the Setch:

'The farther they went, the more beautiful became the steppe. At that time all the south, all that expanse which is now New Russia, right up to the





THE HUNT FOR A PRISONER



Black Sea, was a green virgin wilderness. Never had plough passed over the immeasurable waves of wild growth; only the horses, hidden in it as in a wood, trampled it down. Nothing in Nature could be finer. The whole surface of the earth was a green-gold ocean splashed with millions of different coloured flowers. Through the thin high stalks of grass twinkled blue and lilac cornflowers, and the yellow broom spread forth its spiry crest; the pale milfoil variegated the surface with its parasol-like leaves; an ear of wheat, carried Heaven knows whence, was burgeoning amid the profusion of wild plants. Partridges, protruding their necks, pecked under the delicate roots. The air was full of a thousand different bird-notes. In the sky poised hawks, unmoving on outspread wings, and fixing unmoving eyes on the grass. The cry of a cloud of wild geese flying in the distance was echoed in God knows what distant mere. From the grass a gull rose with measured flight and bathed luxuriously in the blue waves of the air. There, she has soared up to the heights, and only twinkles like a black spot. There, with a turn of her wings, she flashes in the sun. . . . Deuce take you, steppes, how fine you are!

By the middle of June, however, moisture fails,



and the appearance of the steppe changes. The gay colours disappear, the grass becomes brown or blackish-grey. The brilliant poppies and cornflowers are replaced by weeds or plants that need less water, such as the sage and feather grass. The earth dries up and cracks, and the air is full of thin dust raised by the burning wind. Only at the time of the autumn rains does the steppe revive again, but then there are not the rich hues of spring. Yet even in the oppressive days of summer, when there is no wind, nor cloud, nor noise, the steppe is never without its melancholy beauty. Here lies a strip of green sedge amid the scorched brown grass, there is a solitary tree. One is absolutely alone: only rarely is there a line of waggoners or a mounted Nogai Tartar on a kirghiz *aul* with the circular, dome-shaped *yurt* of slender wooden rods covered with thick felt. The distance is hazy and lilac-covered, and if the sky is blue and cloudless it seems to tremble. Or possibly—as the Russian writer loves to depict—amid the stillness something may suddenly burst in the air, and a gust of wind whistle in the steppe grass. The small scrub is torn from the earth, and with straw and feathers caught in a black, whirling column of dust that sweeps ever larger and faster over the plain. Against the

winter winds not the strongest animal can stand. Horses and cattle are seized by the whirlwind and borne along, despite themselves, till their strength is exhausted, and they fall panting to the ground. They sometimes die in such storms in thousands.

In summer nights the darkness falls quickly. Toward the Black Sea the closed salt *limans*, or river mouths, gleam with a phosphoric light. Nights spent on the steppe, in whatever weather, leave an unforgettable impression, whether in winter, when one waits at a desolate post-station till a storm abates, or in summer, when one drives under the moon on such a night as 'Tchekhoff has pictured in his story, 'On the Steppe':

'In July evenings and nights the cries of quails and corncrakes are no longer heard, the nightingales no longer sing in the bushy hollows, there is no longer the fragrance of flowers; but none the less the steppe is still beautiful and full of life. Scarcely does the sun set and darkness wrap the earth, ere the day's weariness is forgotten and everything forgiven and the broad-bosomed steppe draws easy breath. As if because it does not see its age in the gloom, the grass raises a gay, youthful rustling, which you do not hear during the day; rustling,

whistling, crackling, the basses, tenors, and trebles of the steppe—all are blended in a continuous monotonous sound which makes it good to remember and be melancholy. Its unvaried music lulls you like a cradle-song; you drive on and feel yourself falling asleep, but then from somewhere or other is borne to you the broken, alarmed cry of a wakeful bird, or a vague sound like a human voice: a kind of wondering ‘ah-ah!’ is wafted abroad, and your doziness flies away for ever. And sometimes you drive past a dell with shrubs, and you hear the bird that the steppe people call the ‘sleeper’ crying out to somebody or other, ‘Sleep, sleep, sleep’; and another one laughs or bursts into hysterical wailing—that is the owl. God knows for whom they cry and who hears them on that plain, but their cry is full of melancholy and complaint. There is the smell of hay and scorched grass and faded flowers, and the smell is heavy, luscious, and sweet.

‘Through the mist you discern everything, but it is difficult to define colour and outline. Everything seems different from what it really is. As you drive on, you spy all at once standing in front by the side of the road a silhouette like a monk; he does not stir, he waits and holds something in his



INTERIOR OF A SIBERIAN PRISONERS' WAGGON



hands. Is that a robber? The figure nears and grows; there, it is even with the carriage, and you see that it is not a man at all, but a solitary bush or great stone. Such motionless expectant figures stand erect on the ridges, or cower behind the *kurgans*, or peep out of the steppe grass, and they are all like people, and inspire suspicion.

‘But when the moon rises, the night becomes pale and dark. As for mist, it is as though it had never been. The air freshens, and is transparent and warm. You can see clearly in every direction. You can even distinguish the separate stems of grass by the road. For a long distance you can mark white skulls and stones. Suspicious figures like monks seem darker and look more threatening in the light background of the night. Oftener and oftener amid the monotonous rustling of the grass, something’s astonished ‘Ah-ah!’ startles the still air, and you hear the cry of a wakeful or dreaming bird. Broad shadows sweep over the steppe as clouds over heaven, and if you look long at the mysterious distance, misty, wonderful forms rise up there, and are piled one on the other. . . . It is a little eerie. But you glance at the pale green star-spangled sky, on which is neither cloud nor blot, and you understand why the warm air is still, why



Nature is on guard and fears to stir; she grieves and rues to lose but a moment of life. Only at sea and on the moonlit-steppe is it possible to judge of the infinite depth and immensity of the sky. It looks down caressingly with a strange, tired, beautiful glance, and beckons to itself, and that caress makes your head giddy.

‘You drive on an hour or two. . . You come unexpectedly on a silent old man *kurgan* or a stone woman, set up God knows by whom or when; a night-bird flies noiselessly over the earth, and little by little the legends of the steppe, the tales of chance-met travellers, the stories of your steppe nurse, recur to the memory and all that you yourself have seen or imagined in your soul. And then in the hum of insects, in the suspicious figures and *kurgans*, in the blue sky and the moonlight, in the flight of a night-bird, in everything you see and hear—you begin to feel the triumph of beauty, to feel youth and the bloom of strength and a passionate thirst for life; the soul responds to that beautiful sad country, and longs to fly over the steppe with the night-bird. And in the triumph of beauty, in the excess of happiness, you feel a tension and a yearning, as if the steppe were





A KIRGHIZ WOOING



conscious that it was alone, that its richness and inspiration perish to no purpose for the world, sung by nobody, heeded by nobody, and through the gay rustling you hear its anguished despairing cry for a singer, a singer !

## CHAPTER XXXII

### THE CRIMEA

IN form the Crimea is a rough parallelogram attached to the mainland at the top right-hand corner with a second smaller parallelogram projecting from the bottom of the same side. It is divided by a wall of hills into two distinct parts. Of these the northern is much the larger part, and is closely connected with the steppes beyond the Perekop Isthmus. The southern portion, on the other hand, is a narrow stretch of seaboard, by history, physical nature, and climate quite different from the rest of European Russia. But since the incorporation of the peninsula in the empire in 1783, this second division has played such a noteworthy part in Russian life, and its scenery, like that of the Caucasus, laid such a powerful hold on Russian imagination, that while Lithuania and Esthonia, Poland and Finland, must be in the present work sacrificed to considerations of space, it would seem unjustifiable to pass over the Crimea.

Nearly the whole country is now Russianized, but the bulk of the population is still Tartar. Great numbers emigrated to Turkey immediately after the annexation, and also during the Sebastopol campaign, when in the Perekop district alone of three hundred villages there remained only deserted *djurts*.

The steppes in the north with their continental climate, their rich spring colours, their clouds of dust, and burnt, cheerless, appearance in summer, have little to distinguish them from the steppes in Russia proper. They contain numerous salt lakes, but few fresh-water wells or streams. Towards the north and east the inhabitants of more than fifty villages, mostly Tartar shepherds, collect the spring rain-water in shallow pits called *auts* for use throughout the rest of the year, when the rivulets from the north slope of the hills become dry. There are, however, numerous artesian wells in the Eupatoria district and by the lagoon of the Sivash, or Rotten Sea, across which on a string of islands runs the railway from the mainland. Its low foul-smelling shores are bare of vegetation, and after stormy weather, when the east winds drive the waters before them, form broad expanses of slimy mud. A few swans, pelicans, and gulls,

breed on its islands, but in general it is dreary and lifeless : both birds and fish are rare. Into it flows the Salter, the only large stream in the Crimea, which in winter is a foaming torrent but in summer little more than a succession of pools. On the seaward side the Sivash is enclosed by a narrow strip of land about eighty miles long and varying in breadth from four miles to a quarter of a mile. This is called the Arabatsk Point. Along it, passing a few scattered forms, is the road that leads to Genichesk, where it joins the mainland, and farther north to Melitopol. This narrow level between two seas is a well-known place for observing mirages.

In minerals, apart from iron in the Kertch peninsula, the Crimea is not rich, but salt is obtained in large quantities from the numerous lakes that lie along its northern shores, separated by long low sandbars from the Black Sea and the Sea of Azoff. Where these lakes are fed by streams, their beds are covered by layers of mud brought down in the spring floods. The mud consists largely of vegetable matter, whose peculiar chemical qualities make it efficacious for the treatment of such diseases as scrofula, gout, or tuberculosis. This cure was employed by the Tartars, who dug

a hole in the dried bottom of the lake into which they put the invalid, covering him except for his head with the freshly exposed mud. The method followed at the present day is substantially the same. The invalid is sunk into his mud bath and left for about twenty minutes with an umbrella sheltering his head from the hot sun. Then he is washed with warm water and carried back to his room, where he sweats in pools and will drink as much as ten tumblers of thin lemon-flavoured tea.

The Crimean hills are of volcanic origin, and a continuation of the Caucasus Mountains interrupted at the narrow Strait of Kertch or Yenikali. There are three ranges. The first of these does not extend beyond the west part of the peninsula, and does not rise above nine hundred feet. Near Simferopol it merges in the second line, which in places attains the height of over seventeen hundred feet above sea-level. In it are some fine precipitous spurs, deep gorges, and romantic wooded glens, but above all it is distinguished by isolated peaks, such as the pyramid of Tepé-Kermen that rises abruptly from the gardens three miles south of Baktchi-Sarai, or the still more interesting cone of Mangoup-Kalé that, from the west on the Ai-Todor road, looks per



fectly unclimbable. Its lower slope is wooded, but above that a sheer bastion of rock stands out precipitous against the blue sky. In medieval times the fortress, surrounded on all sides with walls and towers, whose ruins crown the top, must have been wellnigh impregnable. The rock is honeycombed with watch-posts and chambers. This stronghold may have been constructed by the Greeks, but more probably it was made about the sixth century by the Goths, who retained their hold on the Crimea more than a thousand years after the rest of their vast empire slipped from their grasp. As late as the seventeenth century a Gothic people, living under the shadow of Mangoup-Kalé, was distinguished from its neighbours by physical type and Germanic language. The third division of the hills is much the highest and finest of the three, especially on its steep southern side. Towards the north, like the lesser ranges, it falls in a gentle slope. From Feodosia in the east it runs along the coast to the southwestern corner of the peninsula at Cape Fiolente, where a monastery of St. George occupies the probable site of the Tauric temple, in which human sacrifices were offered to the wild goddess identified by early Greek travellers with Artemis. At their

most westerly point the hills rise almost overhanging the seaboard, so that seen from a passing steamer they are much foreshortened. Near the Baidarski Gate they retreat two versts from the sea, and this distance is gradually increased to three versts at Kikenets, four at Limeni, six at Yalta, and eight at Alushta. This narrow littoral, sheltered by the hills from the north, is the Russian Riviera.

In the third range there are no outstanding solitary peaks as in the second. Throughout nearly its whole extent stretch the so-called Yaila, a fairly even summit plateau, broken only by a few low rocky eminences. The Yaila begin above the village of Kutchuk-Koi, and for some versts are narrow. Over Limeni they widen to three or four versts, and then contract again above the valley in which Yalta lies. Beyond Nikita this plateau reaches its greatest breadth, and extends almost to the coast. Here it is called Babugan Yaila. Not much farther eastwards is the highest point in the Crimea, Roman-Kosh, which rises to about five thousand feet above sea-level. But the finest hill scenery lies north of Alushta. There the range breaks into three separate branches—Karabi, Demirdji, and Tchatyr Dagħ. This last hill was

known to the Greeks as Trapezos, the Table Mountain, and the name well suits its massive quadrangular summit, from which precipices fall away on every side. The Tartar name, the Mountain of the Tent, represents with equal vividness the appearance from a distance of the white regular walls. The fine valley between it and Demirdji is one of the vital points in the peninsula, and through it runs the excellent carriage road between Simferopol and Alushta. Beyond the little fishing village of Tuak the hills are much lower, and split up into several chains and separate groups. At Feodosia the main chain ceases altogether. From that point to the middle of the Kertch peninsula stretches level steppe, and there, again, low hills run eastward, which geologically belong still more closely to the Caucasus.

These ranges throughout their whole extent are rich in admirable scenery, but much of it remains unappreciated, for the fair weather Yalta tourists are the last persons in the world to stray from the bridle paths. There are countless narrow gorges with festoons of water plants, cold, clear, hurrying streams, waterfalls shrouded in spray, stalactite caves and deep ravines, with precipitous walls whiter than the snow which lingers in them late in



ROYAL PALACE, LIVADIA, CRIMEA



summer. In the delightful valleys of the Alma, Belbek, T'chornaya, and Salghir, yellow cornfields alternate with dark green woods of beeches and walnuts, and here and there frowning bluffs of cliff jut out boldly from the grassy ridges. Their romantic glens contain the finest gardens of the Crimea, for there is no sharp break with the steppes northward, and hence both northern and southern floras are found in great variety and abundance. For the most part the hills are wooded. Oaks, pines, beeches, and cypresses grow in profusion on the lower slopes, and the higher are clothed with maples, ashes, elms, and pines. The beech woods particularly are thick and close, with frequent clumps of giants, each one of which is more than fifteen feet in circumference. But just as in the Urals, the Crimean forests, however picturesque their great masses of colour appear from a distance, oppress the traveller actually passing through them with their silence and lifeless monotony. Save for the jay and woodpecker, there are no birds, and only rarely is the earth carpeted with grasses or flowers. On the hills the climate is more moderate than in the steppe. From half-way through April to the end of October summer weather prevails, balmy, without being oppressively



hot. Especially pleasant are the months of September and October, when one rainless day succeeds another, and only at midday a few rare clouds obscure the sun. In such weather on one of the narrow rock-aûtes—though these are lamentably few—one is in an interspace of blue world above and green world below, ‘where never creeps a cloud or moves a wind.’ The winter season is quite unlike the even thawless cold of Russia. There are continual sudden changes from mild days, when overcoats are a burden, to sharp frosts with blustering gales. But in the passes, which are called *bogaz*, these storms sometimes stop communication for whole weeks on end.

On crossing the hills to the coast between Cape Laspi and Alushta one passes immediately several degrees farther south. It is this stretch of seaboard that constitutes the Crimea for the average Russian. In climate it is incomparably better than any other place in the western half of the empire. Its mild dryness is irresistibly suggestive of Nice and Hyères, and its vegetation of the country districts round Pisa and Florence. Above seven hundred feet the flora corresponds with that of the Tuscan Apennines. The lower slopes are covered with evergreens that are nowhere met with in



European Russia. But it is not so much these that give its peculiar colour to the south coast as the innumerable varieties of trees in the parks and gardens. Above all the dark green of the cypress strikes the eye of the visitor from the north. But there are also cedars, laurels, box-trees, palms, pomegranate trees, magnolias, and olives. Every slope is full of creeping plants, especially the wild rose and the vine. Even in December or January but two or three warm sunny days are needed, and fresh tender grass appears, the buds open on the roses, and little leaves uncurl on the oaks. In the depth of winter at Yalta Tartar boys sell great bunches of snowdrops and violets.

But in truth there is no winter on the south coast of the Crimea. From time to time, indeed, there are cold snaps with an east or west wind—the latter is the more unpleasant, but the rarer—and at night frosts may be registered up to twelve degrees. Soon, however, the sun shines forth, the sky clears, and the snow that has lain for a day or two melts away. As a rule, there are only nine days when snow falls and seven when it covers the ground. No wonder, then, that this district appeals so strongly to Russians of delicate health, taking refuge here from the searching cold of Petersburg or Moscow.

In fact, the summer weather continues with scarcely a break the whole year through. There is no real spring or autumn. The only distinction between the seasons is that in the earlier part of the year there are a few, not more than a dozen, fogs, lasting only some minutes, and at most half an hour, which rise from the sea to the hills, and that in the latter part there are occasional raw days with wind and rain. But from June to October every day is serene and glorious, especially in the morning and at nightfall. In the middle of the day the sun's heat is roasting, but even in the hottest hours there is not the sultry stifling dryness that oppresses Russia proper, and at noon a cool sea-breeze and a gentle shower of warm summer rain clear the air. Perhaps the very finest time is the earlier part of October, when everything is quiet and the sky spotlessly blue, when there is no longer the summer heat, and from the sea comes now not a cooling wind, but a soft warmth. Thus for thirty weeks on end one may count with certainty that to-morrow will be just as delightful as to-day and yesterday. Half the year basks in conditions which in the north last at most only seven or eight weeks, and then not every year.

The soil on the southern slope is mostly clayey,

and hence where the cliffs extend close to the shore great masses of them frequently break off and splash into the water. Generally the sea is very deep, and but a little way off land the lead finds bottom at only three hundred feet. Bathing begins about the end of May; for the greater part of the coast, unfortunately, and markedly so at Yalta and Alushta, the sea bottom is stony. The steep hill-slopes are picturesque at every season, but especially so in spring, with their masses of vines and strawberry trees, with the dark green of the moss and fresh light green of the grasses, with the blossom of cherries or laurels, through which ring the notes of the birds of passage flying north. And admirable, too, at a distance from a boat are the countless silver threads of waterfalls leaping plumb to the sea, spilling in the clear air their 'thousand wreaths of dangling water-smoke.' It is this Crimean south coast even more than the vales of Ida whose fragrance and loveliness are mirrored in Tennyson's 'Oenone':

'The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,  
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine,  
And loiters, slowly drawn. On either hand  
The lawns and meadow-ledges midway down  
Hang rich in flowers, and far below them roars  
The long brook falling thro' the clov'n ravine

In cataract after cataract to the sea. . . .  
And overhead the wandering ivy and vine,  
This way and that, in many a wild festoon  
Ran riot, garlanding the gnarled boughs  
With branch and berry and flower thro' and thro'.

The most striking approach to this coast is by the road from Sebastopol to Yalta, where on the summit of the pass the grey rock-walls of the Baidar Gate frame in a remarkable picture of hills, slopes, woods, and sea. Through its extent it is dotted with pretty villas shining white among the vineyards. There are several watering-places, in which, especially at Yalta, living is at all times exorbitantly expensive. Quite near Yalta is the Imperial Palace of Livadia, charming in its gardens and unpretentious simplicity; and also near is the most beautiful spot in the Crimea, the ruins of the burnt palace of Oreanda, a fairyland of cool grottoes, marble colonnades, wild crags, tropical vegetation, and streaming waterfalls.

The modern capital of the Taurida Government is Simferopol on the Salghir. Twenty miles to the south-west in a picturesque valley lies Baktchi-Sarai, the old residence of the Khans. It is still quite an Eastern town, with dogs, dirt, and dancing

Dervishes. The two-storied Tartar buildings, perched above one another on the hillside, are made of wood and wattle, smeared inside and outside with clay. Towards the streets the walls are blind. The noise and squalor of the town are in startling contrast with the peaceful beauty of the palace gardens. This is the Russian Grenada, and especially in the moonlight the tapering minarets and the gentle ripple of water, whose spray falls on dark cypresses and vines, hold the visitor in that magic fascination which has not yet deserted Oriental cities like Bagdad, or Bokhara, or Samarkand. The palace itself, in spite of restorations, has retained much of its original appearance. An air of melancholy broods over the deserted Council Hall, the tomb marked by simple columns and the famed Fountain of Tears that inspired the poignantly beautiful odes of Mickiewicz and Pushkin.

Another interesting place is Kertch in the extreme east, the ancient Panticapæum, the seat of the Bosphoric Kings. The town is spread out above the shore in the form of an amphitheatre. Most of the houses are adorned with pillars and balconies, and are built of stone. There is a museum of considerable antiquarian importance,

and an old church, part of which dates from the first century. Behind the town rises the Mithridate hill, with terraces scored by excavations. On its summit are a half-ruined tower and the so-called 'chair of Mithridates' cut out roughly in the rock, from which the Pontic King is said to have watched the manoeuvres of his fleet. From this point you get an admirable view of the desolate *kurgan*-studded steppe, and the racing firths of the Cimmerian Bosphorus.



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