

THE  
EXPANSION OF RUSSIA

1815—1900

BY

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## GENERAL PREFACE.

*The aim of this series is to sketch the history of Modern Europe, with that of its chief colonies and conquests, from about the end of the fifteenth century down to the present time. In one or two cases the story commences at an earlier date: in the case of the colonies it generally begins later. The histories of the different countries are described, as a rule, separately; for it is believed that, except in epochs like that of the French Revolution and Napoleon I, the connection of events will thus be better understood and the continuity of historical development more clearly displayed.*

*The series is intended for the use of all persons anxious to understand the nature of existing political conditions. "The roots of the present lie deep in the past"; and the real significance of contemporary events cannot be grasped unless the historical causes which have led to them are known. The plan adopted makes it possible to treat the history of the last four centuries in considerable detail, and to embody the most important results of modern research. It is hoped therefore that the series will be useful not only to beginners but to students who have already acquired some general knowledge of European History. For those who wish to carry their studies further, the bibliography appended to each volume will act as a guide to original sources of information and works more detailed and authoritative.*

*Considerable attention is paid to political geography, and each volume is furnished with such maps and plans as may be requisite for the illustration of the text.*

G. W. PROTHERO.

## PREFACE.

“**W**HAT point of view,” asked Lamartine, “will you take in writing your People’s History? If you consider an action under the aspect of the glory attaching to it, you will delight a warlike nation which has been dazzled before it has been instructed, and is rendered blind by the pinchbeck glitter to the true value of the men and events that have risen above its horizon. If you appeal to patriotism, you will excite the enthusiasm of a nation which excuses its lofty egoism by pleas of self-preservation and greatness, and sometimes forgets that it does not stand alone in Europe. But neither of these standpoints will give you the real truth. What, then, remains? The morality of the actions which you have to describe. If you desire to form the judgment of the masses, to rescue them from the immoral doctrine of success, do what has never been done before—*give a conscience to History*. By treating your theme in this spirit you will win less immediate popularity; you will not fire the passions or the imagination of the people, but you will render a thousand times better service to their cause, their interests, and their reason.

“Teach them by facts, by events, by the hidden meaning of those great historic dramas of which we perceive only the scenery and the actors while their plot is contrived by an invisible Hand—to know, to judge, and to moderate themselves. Make them capable of distinguishing those who serve from those who mislead them, those who dazzle from those who enlighten them. Point to every great man and great event,

and say, 'Weigh them for yourselves, not with the false weights of your transient passions, your prejudices, your anger, your national vanity, your narrow patriotism, but by the universal conscience of the human race, and by the utility of each act to the cause of civilisation.' Convince them that every nation has its post assigned to it; every class of society its relative importance in the sight of God. Teach the people, therefore, to respect themselves; to participate, with the full consciousness of what they are doing, in the progressive accomplishment of His designs. Teach them to form a moral sense, and to exercise it upon the actors and events in their annals. To do this is to give the people much more than power, than dominion, or empire. It is to give them a conscience, the judgment and sovereignty of themselves. It is to place them above all government. For, in sooth, on the very day which finds them fit to reign they will reign—it signifies little under what form or what name. It is the people who must change; governments will change after their image. For, rest assured, as is the people so is their government; and if a people complain of their own, it is because they are unworthy of a better<sup>1</sup>."

In tracing the expansion of Russia during the nineteenth century I have not been unmindful of the noble words uttered nearly sixty years ago by the historian of the French Restoration.

Considerations of space have compelled me to deal in a summary fashion with several interesting branches of my enquiry. Literature has been touched upon only in so far as it reflected the broad features of national life. Education, too, has received scanty attention in this work. The Russian Government is still in advance of its subjects' intellectual

<sup>1</sup> *Essay on the Manner of Writing History for the People*, by Alphonse de Lamartine.

development; but a day must come when the gulf will disappear. The Tsar and his advisers do not stand alone in believing that political danger lurks in the premature creation of a half-instructed proletariat. It is a significant fact that, while in the United Kingdom children attending primary schools form nearly 13 per cent. of the population, the corresponding ratio in Russia is 3·2, and in British India 1·9 per cent.

To depict the progress of an Empire during a hundred years is no easy task, and I am conscious of many deficiencies. Dr G. W. Prothero, Editor of this Series, has given me much help in regard to the international politics of the period; and in this branch of my work he may be regarded as my collaborator. My labours have been lightened by the help of Mr Roger Cholmeley, whose mastery of Russian is as remarkable as his Greek scholarship. I am under deep obligations to Count Eric Berg, of the Russian Home Office; Baron George Grävenitz, Councillor of the Russian Embassy; Professor Robert Hermanson, of Helsingfors; the Earl of Northbrook, G.C.S.I.; Madame Olga de Novikoff; Baron Ungern-Sternberg, Consul-General in London; and to his Excellency S. J. Witte, Minister of Finance and Commerce. My treatment of the reigns of Nicholas I and of Alexander II and III is based on the brilliant studies of M. Serge de Tatistcheff, late Commercial Attaché of the Russian Embassy. I am also especially indebted to the works on Russia of M. M. G. Créhange, Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu, F. de Martens, N. Schilder, and A. Rambaud; of Lord Curzon of Kedleston, Sir Donald Mackenzie-Wallace, K.C.I.E., Messrs W. R. Morfill, Henry Norman, M.P., and Henry Tyrrell.

FRANCIS HENRY SKRINE.

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## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTION.

THE Russian Empire is an organism unique in the world's history. It embraces an area greater than Alexander's conquests, than the solid dominion built up by Rome, than the realms overrun by Chinghiz or Timur ; it is surpassed only by Greater Britain. This fact should prompt the citizens of both countries to sympathy and a mutual desire for fuller knowledge. It seems almost miraculous that All the Russias should have been evolved from a group of barbarous oligarchies which existed in a state of perpetual discord. For they are not held together by military force, as were all preceding empires, and as India was until the sense of loyalty to the British Crown had taken root, of which the Delhi Durbar is the most recent expression. Russia has the gift of imbuing all her subjects with a feeling of citizenship. The wonder vanishes when we reflect that her evolution is governed by nature's law of growth, whose workings are seen alike in the empire and the blade of grass. It is influenced by that mysterious impulse which moves the swarm of bees to quit their richly-stored hives and found new settlements elsewhere. Given a people with a colonising instinct and schooled by their environment to endure and conquer ; given an absolute power with its roots set deeply in vital religion ; and modern Russia is the inevitable result.

Whither tend the sources brought into play over a sixth of the globe's surface, in a population of 135,000,000, which doubles in seventy years? The answer has a momentous

bearing on civilisation; and is of especial importance to ourselves, whose sphere of influence marches with Russia's throughout the Asiatic Continent. Unhappily, Britons and Russians are separated by the breadth of Europe, by divergence in creed, language and politics. A friendship dating back to the spacious days of Elizabeth was destroyed by the Crimean War, which left behind it a legacy of suspicion and unreasoning hatred. The tone of the British Press is coloured by the very natural prejudices of political exiles who form a colony in every European capital; and by the frantic terrors of that school which sees a menace to India in each stage of the Russian advance. No English writer has yet dealt with the wondrous revolution wrought in Russia during the nineteenth century. This work is an honest attempt to sketch its more salient features, which have hitherto escaped observation in the West.

The most potent factor in Russia's development is the Autocracy, which differentiates her from other European Powers, and imparts a singular interest to her history. That of France lost much of its charm when she broke violently from her past at the close of the eighteenth century. The story of modern Germany is one of man's triumphs over a grudging nature; but our admiration for its founder is tempered by a conviction that he too often displayed a cynical disregard of justice and right. In Russia, on the other hand, we are fascinated by the constant recurrence of the personal equation. We trace the impress of heredity, education, and environment on a single mind; and we see the reflex action of each in the movements of the gigantic frame which that mind controls. Taking this standpoint we find that the phases of Russia's growth were synchronous with the reigns of her Tsars.

In a territory dominated by a youthful and comparatively homogeneous race other influences necessarily asserted themselves to modify and sometimes to overmaster the ruler's policy. At the dawn of the last century educated



Russians were grouped in two opposing camps. The Old-Russians stood on ancient ways, holding that their country had naught to borrow from the West, with its survivals of feudalism, its effete conceptions of privilege and property. This party had offered a stubborn resistance to Peter the Great's reforms. Their opponents, the Liberals, dated back to that finished type of the enlightened despot; and received a mighty stimulus from the sympathy with French philosophers displayed by Catherine II and her courtiers. They cherished the ideals of material progress and constitutional liberty current in western Europe and America. In the absence of any parliamentary mechanism these parties had no battle-ground. We see the alternate play of divergent schools of thought rather than a balance maintained between opposing forces. Everything on the globe's surface is periodic; and Russian history is one of action and reaction. The era of reform which set in at the close of the Crimean War, and produced that stupendous measure, the abolition of serfdom, was succeeded by an era of severe repression.

Both sections underwent the evolution which nature imposes on all vital organisms. The conception of nationality, which has recast the map of Europe, converted extreme Old-Russians into Slavophiles, who sought to unite the scattered fragments of the great Slav family under a common banner. Their principles took root in Austria during the third decade of the century. They were fostered by Prince Metternich who, true to his motto, "divide et impera," ever sought to sow discord between German, Slav, and Magyar. Spreading to Russia, they were warmly adopted by the orthodox; and in 1867 a congress met at Moscow, on which every Slav community was represented. It served but to demonstrate the impossibility of common action. The curse of Babel was not responsible for the discordant notes struck at Moscow: it was rather divergence in religion and historical associations. Vainly did the Moscow Panslavists preach unity

under the Double Cross to Catholic Poles, whose hearts still bled for their country's woes; to Catholic Croats, Slavonians and Czechs, who preferred the sway of the house of Habsburg to that of a Russian Tsar. Undaunted by the partial failure of their crusade, the Slavophile committees which overspread Russia turned their attention to Serbs and Bulgars, who were identical with them in race, religion and language. Their manœuvres in the Balkans and at home produced the disastrous war of 1877—8.

Nations borrow from each other little save their vices; and the change undergone by the advanced section of Russian Liberals savours strongly of degeneration. Nihilism germinated in the brain of the old French philosophers; and, after passing through the alembic of German mysticism, it found a congenial soil in Russia. The resulting perversion of Rousseau's and Hegel's doctrines was elaborated in the medical schools—a focus of materialism; and in the universities, which differ radically from those of Great Britain. Russian students were miserably poor; and hunger is an ill councillor. They were not subjected to wholesome discipline, and found no outlet for their exuberant vitality in athletic sports. Moreover, this sombre gospel of negation touched an innermost chord of the Slav's nature, prone as it is to yearn for man's regeneration, and possessing a positive side which clings to a desperate cause. Thus Nihilism assumed three distinct phases. The first was a cult, with pass-words and peculiarities of costume, a passing fashion, to all appearance not more dangerous than on a which the young men and maidens of this country affect. Taking developed into a political party; and in the profound growth which followed the Turkish War of 1877—8 their In a tæed the proportions of a highly-militant creed. After geneossia to the very brink of anarchy, Nihilism was to mhe positive conceptions of faith and national life polt it by Alexander III. Its successor is Social

Democracy, which finds disciples in the urban proletariat called into being by the industrial revolution now in progress. But Nihilism has left an enduring mark on Russian literature, and its trail is seen clearly in Leo Tolstoy's later writings.

The expansion of an empire is governed by other forces than mere phases of thought which are, of their very nature, evanescent. A glance at the map of Russia will show that she belongs geographically to Asia. Vast as the European provinces seem, when brought to scale with those of adjacent monarchies, they are hardly more than the fringe of a dominion stretching from the Baltic Gulf to the Pacific Ocean. The lines marked out by nature for Russia's advance lie southwards and south-eastwards of Moscow, the centre of her national life. Its rationale is to be found in—

(1) The colonising instinct, which prompted the communities settled on the river banks of ancient Muscovy to overflow and plant offshoots in all directions.

(2) The nomad instinct, grafted on the national character by its strain of Tatar blood. It should not be forgotten that, for several centuries, Russia was under the yoke of warlike tribes, who were driven to seek fresh fields by the desiccation of their pastures in eastern Asia. Gathering strength in these locust-like migrations, they overran eastern Europe and southern Asia; and were hurled back to their steppes by Ivan the Great in 1481—exactly ten years after the termination of our Wars of the Roses.

(3) The blind impulse of a rapidly-growing population to burst from ice-bound coasts and gain access to warmer waters. Those attainable by Russia are the Mediterranean, the Persian Gulf, and the Pacific Ocean. There is something pathetic in the struggles of the Colossus to find scope for its superabundant energies.

The westward movement of 1813—15 seems to belie this theory. But in that case the impetus was not given by the genius of the Russian people. Those memorable campaigns

were undertaken by Alexander I at a time when his spirit was stirred to its depths by the French invasion. With this sole exception the course of Russian Empire held its way eastwards throughout the last century. Nicholas I went to war with Persia in 1826; with Turkey in 1828 and again in 1853. He pursued the conquest of the Caucasus, founded an empire on the Pacific coast, and secured control of the chief water-routes of Central Asia. Under Alexander II a footing was regained in the Black Sea; the Caucasian barrier was pierced; and Turkey was again attacked. Bokhara, Khiva, and Kokand—last relics of the Islamic sway in Central Asia—were humbled to the dust; and the Turkoman tribes were brought to heel. Alexander III pushed the Russian frontier to the confines of China, Persia, Afghanistan, and British India. Under Nicholas II the conception that Russia is an Asiatic empire has taken concrete form. China and Persia have been reduced to financial vassalage; and the continent will soon be traversed by a network of trunk railway-lines, which must work a revolution in the world's commerce.

A survey of this almost rhythmic movement leads to some very important deductions. A strong and civilised power which is brought into contact with barbarism has no resource but to conquer and annex. Our Indian Governors General, from Hastings to Dalhousie, were forced into wars of aggression in spite of appeals from their Honourable Masters in Leadenhall Street to confine their attention to commerce. Chernaïev stormed Tashkent with explicit orders from the Tsar in his pocket forbidding the enterprise. Again, Russia's object in seeking spheres of influence coterminous with our own is not the conquest of India. What profit could she reap from absorbing 300,000,000 of new subjects who are always within measurable distance of famine? She has no great middle class needing scope for its superfluous numbers. Moreover, Oriental races conquered by her become, *ipso facto*, Russian citizens, and acquire the right of settling in every part of the empire. Her

dealings with Bokhara and Khiva prove that she is loth to assimilate a highly-developed Asiatic state. She has studded Manchuria with military posts in order to safeguard the trans-continental railway routes; but she hesitates to annex that province lest Siberia should be overrun by Chinese emigrants. What, then, is the rationale of the Russian advance India-wards? It is to be found in a wish to apply a counter-irritant, should Great Britain thwart her real designs. In July 1878 we called checkmate at Berlin. A month later General Kaufmann concluded a treaty with the Amir Sher Ali, which placed his realm under Russian tutelage and produced the second Afghan War. Lastly, it is but too clear that the policy of our Foreign Office with regard to the Eastern Question has, as a rule, been one of undignified protest and panic. That policy plunged us into a war with Russia in 1854; it brought us to the brink of the precipice in 1878 and 1885; and it has destroyed our legitimate influence in Turkey, Persia, and China. The instinct of self-preservation should call a halt to vacillations unworthy of a great people, and lead us to seek a *modus vivendi* with our mighty neighbour which would embrace commercial as well as political interests.

## CHAPTER II.

### RUSSIA IN 1815.

THE cleavage-line between East and West was conspicuous in 1814, when the Congress of Vienna met in order to restore the balance of power after Napoleon's fall. With one exception the communities represented by the sovereign in person or by plenipotentiaries had arrived at the same stage of development. Dynastic interests were regarded as paramount; and, though the world still rang with the echoes of the French Revolution, the prestige of birth and privilege was nearly intact. As a counterpoise to these survivals of feudalism, each country possessed a great burgher-class, whose wealth and political influence were constantly increasing. At the base of the social pyramid was a multitude of agriculturists and handicraftsmen who enjoyed personal freedom, but had no voice in national affairs.

Russia stood out in high relief from this aggregate, swayed by common ideals. Her roots were still planted in the Oriental world, though a statesman's instinct had pushed her westwards. The first impulse to this movement came from Peter the Great. History records but one instance of a people's sudden upspring from infancy to vigorous manhood. Peter found his unwieldy empire a semi-Asiatic power, still bearing the imprint of the Tatar yoke which had paralysed her energies for two hundred and fifty years. Her isolation from the currents of modern life was complete. On the north-west she was cut off from Europe by Sweden. Poland, which for a brief period had

mastered her, stretched on the western frontier from the Baltic nearly to the Danube. The Black Sea was a Turkish lake. Peter saw that Russia must be forced to enter the comity of Christendom. With a determination which knew no obstacles he gave her domestic institutions which raised her from the status of an Eastern oligarchy to that of a great European Power. His foreign policy involved the weakening of Sweden and Turkey and the dismemberment of Poland. These far-seeing aims were kept in view by his successors. With periods of retrogression, and even of anarchy, among the upper classes, and a constant degradation in the masses, the march of Russia from her frozen steppes towards civilisation was sustained throughout the eighteenth century. Peter won Esthonia and Livonia from Sweden, with a footing on the Baltic, and founded there a new capital as a window whence he might look out on Europe. Catherine II pushed her boundaries westwards by sharing in repeated partitions of Poland, the second and third of which were carried out during the Revolutionary Wars. She conquered the Crimea and obtained an outlet for her commerce on the Black Sea.

The Russia of 1815 had a population of 50,000,000, spread over 2,000,000 square miles and bound together by common religion, language, and tradition. She was no mere patchwork empire, such as Austria or Turkey. The central provinces were peopled by a Slavonic race which had proved its capacity for absorption and colonisation, and thrust communities of alien blood beyond its frontiers. It is true that even in Russia the eternal conflict between North and South had left indelible traces. The inhabitants of Great Russia, grouped round Moscow and stretching far to the north-east, were the most mixed, as they were the most progressive and numerous section. They had borne the full brunt of Tatar invasion; and among them was evolved the force destined to weld the majority of the Slavs into one Empire. Kiev was the centre of Little Russia, extending to the south-west. Its population possessed

all the characteristics of Southrons with more independence than such races usually display. White Russia embraced the governments of Vitebsk, Moghilev, Grodno, and Minsk on the Polish frontier, a land of splendid forests but marshy soil. Its people were ethnologically the purest, but were also the least advanced of the Russian tribes. The Baltic Provinces, inhabited by races of Finnish and Letto-Lithuanian stock, had been for centuries under Teutonic influences; and the culture of the upper classes was that of Central Europe. The western governments were inhabited by Poles, whose chequered history proves that the ties of kinship are less tenacious than those of civilisation and religion. Byzantium had given both to Russia, while Polish ideals were derived from Rome. The resulting hostility between these branches of the Slav family had once well-nigh wrecked the ill-consolidated empire of the Tsars: and it produced those iniquitous partitions which made Poland a mere geographical expression. But in spite of racial differences, inevitable in so vast an area, no European country exhibited fewer dialects than Russia, or less opposition in ethnological types. Her enormous population was as monotonous as her forest-fringed steppes.

While Russia's extent and her unknown strength overshadowed the compact military monarchies of the West, she lagged far behind them in internal development. In 1812 the urban population was considerably less than five per cent. of the whole. St Petersburg had but 300,000 citizens in 1820; Moscow only 247,000 in 1823. The other towns were less the result of organic growth than of administrative aims. Save in Poland and the Baltic Provinces they were mere aggregates of villages. Peter the Great strove to build up a middle class by ranging the handful of merchants in guilds, the first of which was exempt from poll-tax and corporal punishment. But the burgherdom, which restrained feudal tyranny in the West, was still in embryo. External commerce was in the hands of foreigners. Handicrafts were in a rudimentary stage.



There was no division of labour; and the paltry wares wrought by the peasants during the long winter nights were hawked by peddlars or bartered at annual fairs. The learned professions had no corporate existence; and the possession of capital was almost restricted to the nobility. That class in Russia differed essentially from the feudal aristocracies of western Europe. There was, indeed, a group of illustrious families claiming descent from the half-mythical Rurik, who was still regarded as the founder of the Tsardom. These had a prescriptive claim to offices connected with the Court: but of privilege there were few traces in Russia. Birth and family connection were no passports to state employ. Peter the Great had instituted a hierarchy of fourteen parallel degrees in the Army, Navy, Church, and Civil Service; and members of the titular aristocracy could gain distinction only by entering it. The nobles met yearly under their marshals in every government to frame representations as to local affairs. They had a monopoly of holding fairs and distilling the fiery rye spirit consumed by the masses. They owned all the land in Russia which did not form a portion of the Crown domains.

Beneath them, with an embryonic middle class intervening, was a nation of serfs. For two centuries these dumb millions had been chained to the soil, and liable to sale with the estates which they tilled. The power wielded by the landowner was enormous. He could claim his bondsman's labour for three days a week or commute it for a money payment. In the eyes of the law he was the owner of the serf's nominal possessions. The imperial taxes were collected by him; and he chose the annual tale of recruits for the army. He was the sole lawyer and judge on his estate, save in prosecutions instituted by the Crown. The knout and banishment to Siberia were weapons with which he enforced obedience. The cultivator's lot was wretched in the extreme. Education was not within his grasp; for the schools and universities were sacred to landowners and officials. His agricultural implements were of the rudest make,

his cattle few and stunted; sloth and intoxication were his ideals of happiness. But in his deep degradation the peasant still clung to the primitive communal system. Destroyed in western Europe by the encroachments of the landed class, it lingered in many of the groups of wooden huts wherein these human chattels dwelt. On the Crown domains the village elders met periodically in council to divide the land assigned for their maintenance by officers of government.

Privilege, in the western sense of the word, was restricted to the National Church. Its parish priests supplied the ordinances of religion; from the monastic orders the higher offices were filled. Both sections were exempt from poll-tax and conscription. They had their own ecclesiastical courts, and civil justice was in their hands. The emotional side of the Slav character produced many dissident sects, some of which professed the most extravagant doctrines. But the bulk of the population held firmly to the belief that orthodoxy was the only path to salvation. The Greek Church had played a great part in the evolution of the Autocracy, and its roots lay deep in the national life. It was, and still remains, a Freemasonry, binding all classes together in ties of fraternal love. But, while the Church's intervention was indispensable in every social relation, its spiritual influence was at a low ebb. The nobility were deeply tinged with Voltairean philosophy, and discussed religion and ethics from a French standpoint. In common with the masses beneath, they regarded the rites of the national creed as a sort of mechanism.

The keystone of this incomplete social edifice was the Tsar and Autocrat of All the Russias, in whom centred every species of authority. He ruled in matters ecclesiastical through the Holy Directing Synod, whose decrees ran in his name. Eight ministers, charged with the direction of the several state departments, met in Council, but they reported every question of moment to the Tsar and took his orders thereon. The ruling Senate, whose functions were judicial, inquisitorial,

and disciplinary, was presided over in each of its sections by the Tsar's representative, and, while sitting *in plenum*, by the Ruler in person. The Tsar was the chief of an army of 800,000 men, recruited by conscription and tried by a generation of almost unbroken warfare. He commanded a navy of respectable strength in point of numbers, but less efficient because it was confined to port by ice for nearly half the year. The Tsar was the sun to which all eyes were turned. "Know, sir," said Paul I to a foreign ambassador, "that the only man of distinction in Russia is he whom I address; and then only while I am speaking with him." By the ignorant multitude he was venerated as a father, and received honours almost divine. No human being since the days of the Cæsars had so vast a burden of responsibility as the Tsar of All the Russias.

In 1814 this great office was held by Alexander I. He was born in December 1777 and was the eldest son of the Tsarevich Paul, by his second wife, Maria Feodorovna, a Princess of Würtemberg. His father lived in sullen retirement at Gatshina. Originally benevolent and magnanimous, with many varied acquirements, he was soured by long repression, and exercised no influence on his children. Alexander's grandmother, the Empress Catherine II, had superintended his education with maternal care and yet with the comprehensive spirit of a man. His first tutor was General Soltnikov, a soldier of talent and knowledge of the world, who was equally welcome at the Courts of Catherine and the heir-apparent. In 1783 Colonel Cæsar Laharpe became the child's instructor. He was a disciple of Rousseau and Voltaire; an enthusiastic liberal and an adherent of the French Revolution. From his lips Alexander absorbed the fallacious doctrines of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which clung to him until bitter experience robbed him of illusions. The influence of this doctrinaire philosopher was, on the whole, injurious to his pupil and to Russia. He set up his Swiss pocket republic as a model for the greatest empire on the globe, and filled its future ruler's brain with Utopias. As a

counterpoise to Laharpe the young Grand Duke had the tutorship of Protasov, a staunch supporter of Church and State as organised in Russia, and at one with the Swiss republican only in the respect which both inculcated for the ill-fated Paul.

In 1793, Catherine found a wife for her grandson in the person of Princess Louisa of Baden, who was received into the Greek Church as Elizabeth Alexandrovna. She had been brought up at a second-rate German court, and was intimidated by the splendour of Catherine's surroundings. Throughout her life she moved in a narrow circle, which alone discovered the treasures of thought and grace hidden beneath an unassuming exterior. And, to crown her misery, she never won her boy-husband's heart. The union went the way of the majority of those which are founded on political interests. The only child born to the young couple died in infancy, and they drifted apart, to meet again only when both were weighed down by sickness and sorrow. On Alexander's development this early marriage had a sinister effect, for it interrupted his studies and emancipated him too soon from control.

He was saved from moral wreck by an innate nobility of nature, which led him to despise the trammels of etiquette and imperial state, and to cultivate the habits of a Spartan. Nurtured in the charming illusions of Rousseau, he was a worshipper of nature. A flower, a green leaf, a landscape, threw him into ecstasies. This receptivity placed him under the influence of other men in whom he detected sympathies akin to his own. Among his chosen companions were Prince Adam Czartoryski, a noble Pole, who loved his distracted country and gave his life to her cause; Count Novossiltsov, an ardent admirer of the British Constitution, and Count Strogonov, who was a disciple of Mirabeau. One or two older philosophers joined the conclave—Joseph de Maistre, the Sardinian ambassador, who devoted his vast learning and reasoning power to the service of Ultramontaniam; and the Abbé Piatelli, Czartoryski's tutor.

This knot of intimates discussed the future of Russia under Alexander's sway; and all agreed that she was ripe for liberal institutions.

His early manhood was spent amid conflicting influences. Catherine's rule was sullied by all the abuses which are apt to creep in at the close of an autocratic reign too long drawn out. The cynical greed and hypocrisy of her courtiers led Alexander to doubt his ability to reform surroundings so thoroughly corrupt. He told Czartoryski that supreme power should be conferred, not by the accident of birth, but by the national voice; that he was inclined to abandon his claims to the throne and live in retirement in a castle on the Rhine. The Tsarevich Paul found pleasure only in drilling his battalions of "Gatshina Guards," recruited from the dregs of the army. Mutual hatred reigned between mother and son; and the necessity of conciliating both sides implanted in the young Grand Duke's breast a habit of dissimulation which he never shook off. To the constant parades in which he bore a part at Gatshina was due his love for military pomp—a dangerous passion in the master of so many legions. In the meanwhile Catherine II was planning a bold stroke of policy—to declare her son incapable of ruling and to recognise Alexander as her successor. At that time no law existed to prevent her from effecting this revolution; but Laharpe resisted it, and informed Paul of his mother's intentions. He was banished from Russia in 1793. Three years later direct overtures were made to Alexander, but they met with a rebuff. Sooner, he said, than connive at such injustice he would resign his birthright and emigrate to America.

Catherine's designs were stopped by her death in November 1796, when Paul succeeded to unlimited power. His half-demented brain was turned by the sudden change of fortune. Under Catherine II educated Russians had acquired a tinge of European civilisation. They now saw the Empire plunged into the depths of Asia, and ruled by a madman who combined

feudal might, the discipline of a Prussian drill-sergeant, and the arbitrary power of a Tatar Khan. The army wasted its energy in useless parades; commerce and agriculture were crushed; and the wildest caprices reigned supreme. Alexander's gentleness and his known desire to alleviate the lot of those who incurred his father's displeasure made all eyes turn to him with hope. Though his heart was wrung by the folly and injustice around him, duty pointed to an abandonment of his dreams of self-abnegation. "When my turn comes to reign," he wrote, "I will dedicate myself the task of freeing my country. The revolution must be carried out by the exercise of lawful power, which should cease to exist when the Constitution is in force and the nation has chosen its representatives." The concluding years of Paul's régime were a period of sheer anarchy. His excesses did for autocracy what the Reign of Terror effected for republicanism—they made it loathsome. But for the catastrophe which ended them, the whole system of government would have collapsed. Paul I was murdered on the night of March 24, 1801, in one of those palace conspiracies which had so often decided the succession to Russia's thorny crown. It is certain that Alexander had some inkling of a design to enforce the Tsar's abdication. Remorse for this complicity haunted him through life and embittered his last hours. But it is equally beyond cavil that he was in no sense privy to his father's assassination.

Alexander I was still in the flower of early manhood, and gifted with personal graces and a charm of manner which won every heart. By his subjects he was hailed as the Romans a nobled Nerva after the brutalising sway of Domitian. All to heroe, too, saw the dawn of a new era in the advent to British of so enlightened a sovereign. These happy auguries of Mirablt disappointed. The first ten years of the new reign. *clave*—Jose.riod of political reforms. The Tsar called his early devoted his his side and gave each a share in the remodelled *Ultramontanisn*. Peter the Great had placed his councillors

on a collegiate basis in imitation of the system introduced by the Regent Duke of Orleans, on the death of Louis XIV. Alexander replaced the colleges by ministries, seven in number, and associated one of his comrades with the head of each department. Thus Foreign Affairs were directed by Vorontzov and Czartoryski, the Interior by Kotchubey and Strogonov, Justice by the poet Derjavin and Novossiltzov. In 1802 an eighth ministry was added, regulating Public Instruction, and placed under the charge of two of the Tsar's intimates—Count Zavadovski and N. Muraviev. At the same time the Empire was divided into six scholastic circles, each grouped round a reorganised university. The Senate was given a right of inspection and remonstrance with regard to the acts of ministers and even ukases of the Crown. Paul's mechanism of delation was swept away, and with it the trammels laid on trade. The nobility regained their ancient rights; merchants and peasants were granted the faculty of owning land; the censorship of the Press was relaxed. Men felt that a reign of law had superseded the caprices of a human will.

The foreign policy of the new reign opened as brilliantly. In 1802 Alexander put an end to a civil war which was desolating Georgia by annexing that country, and thus made the first step in the advance which has subdued Central Asia. Russia had been dragged into a war with Great Britain by Paul's fanatical admiration for Napoleon. Alexander sent an autograph letter of reconciliation to George III, and foreign commerce returned to its normal channels. But the terms of the Peace of Lunéville (February 9, 1801) convinced him that the French Republic had gained the mastery in its struggle with Austria and Prussia. He turned, like the rest of Europe, to Napoleon's rising sun. In an avowed wish to cooperate with the new dictator of France for the establishment of a lasting peace he entered into a secret convention with him which recognised Russia's right to intervene in European affairs. Soon afterwards he became a party to the Treaty of Amiens (March 25, 1802),

which gave a short truce to war-distracted Europe. But Alexander was not long in perceiving the iron hand of the Corsican adventurer everywhere. Napoleon declared war with England; the First Consul of a Republic became the Emperor of the French, and proclaimed a lasting rupture with legitimacy by the murder of the Duke of Enghien. Alexander recalled his ambassador from Paris and sought a more desirable alliance. Novossiltzov was sent to London to concert with William Pitt "a plan of united intervention on behalf of European peace." The instincts of the British Premier told him that the times were not propitious to such dreams. But the treaty concluded with England made mention of a general conference to define international rights, and was the basis of the subsequent assembly at Vienna. A secret alliance linked Russia with Austria. Prussia, however, vacillated between Napoleon and the Coalition. Alexander visited Frederick William III at Potsdam, swore eternal friendship with him at the tomb of Frederick the Great, and persuaded him to enter the lists against a common foe. Austria opened the campaign of 1805 by attacking France's ally, Bavaria; and behind her three armies those of Russia were massed in support. Old Kutusov, Commander-in-Chief, hastened to join hands with the Archduke Charles, but on reaching the river Inn he learnt that the flower of the Austrian army had capitulated at Ulm, Oct. 20, 1805.

Nothing remained but retreat; and Kutusov was saved from annihilation by the devotion of his lieutenant, Bagration. The young Tsar was not discouraged by the disaster. He hurled defiance at the "Head of the French nation," and met him at Austerlitz, Dec. 2, 1805. It was Alexander's baptism of fire. He saw his troops utterly routed, with a loss of 21,000 men and 133 guns. Austria hastened to make peace with the invaders. The Treaty of Pressburg, Dec. 26, 1805, led to the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, and established French control in the heart of Germany by forming the states



which had bowed before Napoleon into the Confederation of the Rhine. Russia's efforts to secure a footing in Central Europe were undone at a single stroke.

Alexander informed the Prussian King that he was coming to his aid: but all was lost by Frederick William's precipitation. Secure in the old prestige of his country's arms, he advanced to meet the French, and was defeated with crushing loss at Jena and Auerstädt, Oct. 14, 1806. Prussia was humbled to the dust; and the war reached the banks of the Vistula. But Napoleon was checked in the full tide of conquest by the devotion of the Russian troops. Eylau, the bloodiest battle of the century (Feb. 8, 1807), showed him what tenacity could effect against genius. Prussia took heart of grace and signed the Convention of Bartenstein (Apr. 4, 1807), which was remarkable because the allies offered Napoleon the same terms as those put forward at Prague in 1813. Thus encouraged, the Russians again offered battle to the French at Friedland (June 14, 1807). They were driven across the Niémen with heavy loss. The Russian Empire was now reduced to a desperate plight. Its last line of defence was broken; and Napoleon occupied Poland. He had but to foster national aspirations to throw Russia back a century. But both sides longed for peace. The conqueror wished to use Alexander in furtherance of his attempt to destroy British commerce by the Berlin Decrees (Nov. 21, 1806). He required all his strength for the lawless aggression which he was meditating in Spain. The Tsar perceived too late that he had drawn the sword in a fit of exalted sentiment, and for an object utterly foreign to his country's interest. He resolved to abandon the thankless part of deliverer and return to the line of policy bequeathed him by Peter the Great. In June 1807 the two monarchs met at Tilsit, in Eastern Prussia, and settled the destinies of Continental Europe without reference to the other Powers. Alexander was always under some external influence, and he could not resist the magnetism of Napoleon's personality. An ardent friend-

ship was formed at Tilsit, which was used by the French Emperor to consummate his far-reaching designs.

By a treaty concluded on July 7, 1807, Alexander joined Napoleon's continental system, which aimed at the destruction of British commerce, and agreed to despatch an ultimatum to his ally, George III, with war as an alternative of acceptance. He connived at the dismemberment of the territories of another ally, the King of Prussia, and accepted a share of the spoils. He broke with his brother-in-law, Gustavus IV of Sweden, and plotted to tear Finland from his crown. He recognised the Confederation of the Rhine, which substituted French for Russian influence in Germany. He allowed the Prussian provinces of Warsaw, Posen, and Bromberg to become a Grand Duchy under the King of Saxony, and the nucleus of a reconstituted Poland. Tilsit marks a radical change in Alexander's view of the Eastern Question. He had hitherto regarded the Turks as harmless neighbours, and met the Sultan's declaration of war in the previous January by cantoning 80,000 troops on the Bessarabian frontier. Napoleon's maxim that the Dardanelles was the key of the Tsar's house sank deeply into Alexander's mind. He agreed to join France in withdrawing the Balkan provinces from the Ottoman yoke. Well might an English statesman brand Tilsit as a "treacherous peace." Europe regarded the portentous alliance with terror; and it gave rise to the distrust of Russia which still lingers in British public opinion.

Its immediate result was the conquest of Finland, which after two campaigns was surrendered by Sweden under the treaty of Frederikshamn (Sept. 19, 1809). Alexander dealt most generously with the stubborn Finlanders, who had struggled desperately against the might of Russia though deserted by their imbecile sovereign. On March 28, 1809, he had opened the National Diet at Borgå by promulgating an Act of Assurance which recognised Finland's religious and fundamental laws. The erstwhile province of Sweden became an autonomous

state, linked to Russia only in respect of its external relations, and by the fact that the Tsar was, by virtue of his office, Grand Duke. Its boundaries were extended by the cession of Wiborg (1812), which had been wrested from Sweden in 1721. The government was entrusted to a Viceroy, assisted by a Council, which became a Senate in 1816; and legislative power was left in the hands of the fourfold Diet, representing the nobles, clergy, burgesses, and peasants, which Finland possessed in common with other Scandinavian countries. In these measures we detect the same aspirations which, six years later, prompted Alexander to give Poland the status of a kingdom, as a step towards conceding liberal institutions to the Empire at large. This acquisition relieved Russia of her "geographical enemy," Sweden. On the north-western frontier the work of Peter the Great was complete.

Alexander next attempted to seize the Danubian provinces of Turkey, but here he encountered strenuous opposition from Napoleon. A war began with the Porte (April 1809), which was attended by varying fortunes and remained a thorn in Russia's side for three years. The Tsar's irritation was increased by the hatred felt for the French alliance by the mercantile classes, whose commerce was strangled by the exclusion of British goods, and by the semi-Germanised nobility, who sympathised with their fellows in Vienna. The union consummated at Tilsit was rudely shaken. But the French Emperor had an exhausting war in Spain on his hands, and felt that he must give some satisfaction to his ally. He induced Alexander to meet him in 1808 at Erfurt, where all the princes of enslaved Germany gathered to pay him homage. The mutual pledges rendered at Tilsit were renewed in somewhat vaguer terms; and Alexander promised his support should Austria declare war against Napoleon.

The security given by this understanding with the master of Continental Europe enabled Alexander to undertake his long-cherished reforms in domestic affairs. His old councillors, whose bent lay towards the British alliance, were replaced by

men of different mould. From this epoch dates the rise of Count Speranski, to whose promptings Finland owes its much-prized liberties. He was an official of humble birth who had attracted the Tsar's notice by capacity and an enthusiasm for reform; and his rise to a position of almost unbounded power can be matched only in the history of Oriental despotism. In October 1809 Speranski broached a scheme for placing the government on a basis of law and representative institutions. In opposition to his advice, Alexander declined to give immediate effect to so dangerous an experiment. He began by enlarging the powers of the Council of State. It developed into a species of Legislative Chamber; but no bill could pass into law without the Tsar's ratification. It supervised internal affairs and could even decide questions of foreign policy when circumstances permitted. Alexander became the President of this embryonic parliament; and Speranski was named Imperial Secretary with most of the functions of a Prime Minister. This passion for reform was not long-lived. In April 1809 Napoleon broke with the Emperor Francis, and called upon Alexander to render him assistance against Austria, under the terms of Erfurt. The cooperation of the Russian troops was lukewarm; and the Tsar declined to join the Conference of Schönbrunn, which followed on Austria's second collapse. Napoleon's dissatisfaction was shown by the Treaty of Vienna (Oct. 14, 1809) which added western Galicia, with 1,500,000 inhabitants, to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw ruled by his ally, the King of Saxony. The share assigned to Russia in this new partition of Poland was insufficient to compensate her for the injury resulting from the creation of a powerful state on her western frontier, which was evidently meant to serve as a basis for hostile action. Alexander's apprehensions were heightened when he learnt that the splendid Polish army had been reorganised and placed under French control.

The Hanseatic towns, which maintained the closest commercial relations with Russia, and the Duchy of Oldenburg,

regarded as an appanage of the imperial house, were annexed to the French Empire (Dec. 1810). The Tsar's anger at these encroachments was increased by a rebuff which outraged his family instincts. At Erfurt there had been a question of a marriage between Napoleon and Alexander's sister; the second defeat of Austria enabled her conqueror to claim the hand of the Archduchess Maria Louisa. Russia had gained all she wanted from the threadbare alliance, and was not in a position to endure the losses which it entailed. A regulation affecting trade, issued in 1811, permitted the importation of colonial goods in neutral bottoms, and imposed heavy duties on French manufactures. Napoleon's continental system perished, and with it Alexander's last illusions.

War with France was now inevitable. It sounded the death-knell of Speranski's power. All the customs, the passions, and abuses of five centuries were outraged by his reforming zeal. The Conservative or old-Russian party, which had stubbornly resisted Peter's revolutionary aims, and was powerful in his successors' surroundings, declared against the rash liberal. In March 1812 Alexander yielded to the outcry of these selfish cliques and sent Speranski to govern Nijni-Novogorod, whence he was exiled to Perm.

His supplanter was Count Arakchiev, a trusted adviser of Paul I, who transferred to his new master all the passionate devotion of which his strong, ruthless nature was capable. He was a rigid disciplinarian, and his organising power improved the efficiency of the Russian army. His predilection for autocracy soon infected Alexander, whose zeal for law and constitutional methods slackened; and he began to doubt the fitness of his people for administrative experiments. The times were not propitious to a peaceful revolution. Napoleon was gathering his forces for the invasion of Russia. His Grand Army, 678,000 strong, reckoned 356,000 Frenchmen and 60,000 Poles; the rest were Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Belgians, and Slavs from the Illyrian provinces. The host stretched from the Baltic across

Poland; and Napoleon prepared to cross the Niémen with 180,000 men, including his Guard and a splendid cavalry force under Murat. Had he been content to reestablish Poland in her ancient limits, he would have secured all his aims and placed an inseparable barrier in Russia's path westwards. He dallied with the Poles, and lost an opportunity which never returned.

Russia prepared for a Holy War; and a thrill of patriotism inspired her inert masses with vigorous national life. The war with Turkey was abruptly concluded by the Treaty of Bucharest (May 28, 1812), which gave Russia Bessarabia and part of Moldavia, with the Pruth and Lower Danube as a boundary, and left Moldo-Wallachia and Servia under the Sultan's suzerainty. This success enabled Alexander to transfer his southern army to the threatened points. Nor was he left to struggle unaided. Austria and Prussia were too weak to resist Napoleon's demand for contingents; but they proved inefficient allies. Sweden was gained over to the Russian cause by the bait of Norway held out to the Gascon Bernadotte, who had become Crown Prince. With the assurance of moral support, Alexander threw his forces on the invader's path. Three armies guarded the 600 miles of open frontier. Barclay de Tolly, Minister of War, held the line of the Niémen; Bagration, the border of Warsaw; Tormassov, the Galician frontier; while the armies of Finland and Moldavia were posted on either flank. The Tsar joined his head-quarters at Vilna, accompanied by Baron von Stein, the saviour of Prussia and Napoleon's inveterate foe. On learning that the French had crossed the Niémen, the main Russian body retired to the line of the Dniepr and occupied Smolensk on the road to Moscow. Under Stein's advice, Fabian tactics were adopted. Pitched battles were to be avoided, for Napoleon always conquered on a field of his own selection. But the retreating troops and the peasants harried by French pillagers raised the cry of treason; and Barclay de Tolly was forced, against his better judgment, to offer battle at Smolensk. On his defeat the command passed to

Kutusov, who met the invaders at Borodino (Sept. 7, 1812). The battle was a repetition of Eylau. The French were amazed by the stolidity with which their foes encountered repeated cavalry charges and salvos of grape-shot. Not until night fell did Kutusov retreat in perfect order, leaving Moscow undefended.

Napoleon reached the ancient capital of Russia on September 14. He fondly hoped that the city fathers would come forth to offer him submission; but Moscow was deserted by all but a few marauders. He took up his residence in the Kremlin, restless and full of forebodings. The discipline of his troops was rotten; and the gigantic enterprise was already doomed. On the following day a conflagration broke out in the dense mass of wooden buildings, which destroyed 12,000 of them, besides palaces and churches. The emotion felt throughout Russia was overwhelming, for Moscow was far more than a capital. It held the palladia of the Empire, and was associated with every stirring event in Russian history. The Tsar's councillors despaired of their country. Arakchiev, the Chancellor Rumiantzov, the Empress-mother, the Grand Duke Constantine, implored him to accept the invader's overtures of peace. But a change came over his innermost being. He saw the hand of Providence extended to support Russia in her deadly peril, and told Bernadotte that "he would rather bury himself beneath the Empire's ruins than treat with this new Attila." After a fatal delay of five weeks at Moscow, Napoleon wearily set his face homewards (Oct. 19). The retreat of his demoralised legions soon degenerated into a rout; and the severe winter, which set in before they reached Smolensk, was a potent ally of the Russian generals. The absence of a plan for concerted action among them gave Napoleon a partial success on the Beresina (Nov. 25, 1812), and enabled Marshals Ney and Victor to preserve the remnants of the Grand Army from capture. But 200,000 prisoners, 1000 cannon, and 300 eagles remained in Russian hands; and the snow-clad waste between Moscow and the Niémen resembled a shore strewn with wrecks.

On December 8 Napoleon crossed the frontier and posted to Paris, alone. Four days later Kutusov entered Vilna, and took possession of the vast magazines accumulated by the French.

Victory had cost Russia very dear. Her finances were in chaotic disorder; the western provinces were desolate; and the wave of national enthusiasm had spent its force. Alexander's councillors united in imploring him to make peace with Napoleon and be content with the Vistula as his western frontier. But a noble spirit rises to meet a great crisis. The Tsar's took a wider flight; the deism in which he had been reared gave place to a fervent belief in a personal Providence. "The fires of Moscow," he wrote, "have illuminated my mind and filled my heart with a glowing faith. Then did I learn to know God." He adopted the forward policy urged by Stein, ordered his army to enter Prussian territory, and proclaimed at Kalisz his intention to "restore peace and independence to people who were ready for any sacrifice to attain that end." He entered into negotiations with Frederick William III for an alliance, but found him unwilling to stake his remaining possessions on an appeal to arms. Stein, however, declared that his master must be forced to enter the new league. The difficulties raised by timid advisers were thrust aside; and a treaty linking Russia and Prussia against the enemy of Europe was signed in 24 hours (Feb. 27, 1813). Great Britain joined the Coalition by an informal understanding, which was afterwards ratified at Peterwalden (July 8, 1813); but Austria held back and concentrated her forces in Galicia, ready to join the stronger side or to intervene as her interests might dictate. On March 17 Frederick William III declared war upon France; and two days later the Convention of Breslau summoned all Germany to rise, and broke up the Confederation of the Rhine.

Napoleon dealt with the national movement in his incisive style. Leaving half his forces in garrison on the Oder and Vistula, he suddenly appeared on the lines of the Elbe with 180,000 men. His great weakness lay in the youth and in-



experience of the conscripts. The veteran Guard and Murat's splendid squadrons lay buried under Russian snows; and, though he defeated the allies at Lützen (May 2) and Bautzen (May 21, 1813), he was too weak in cavalry to push his advantage home. These disasters, however, intimidated the Prussians; and Alexander's own troops turned their eyes with longing homewards. Austria's turn for action had come. She imposed an armistice on Napoleon, which gave the allies breathing-time; and made the Congress of Prague—summoned in order to offer terms to Napoleon—an excuse for joining the Coalition. This step was effected by the secret Convention of Reichenbach (June 27), which was ratified by the Treaty of Töplitz on Sept. 9, 1813.

The Allies placed three great armies in the field. That of the north, commanded by Bernadotte, operated on the river Havel; the second, under Blücher, occupied Silesia; the Bohemian army, led by Schwartzberg, was massed round Prague. Not a single Russian was in supreme command; but Alexander's spirit, still soaring upwards, directed the military movements and the diplomacy of the coalition. Napoleon's forces stretched from Liegnitz to Dresden, where on August 26 and 27, 1813, he attacked Schwartzberg and drove him back with heavy loss. Thereupon the allies resolved to avoid the master and deal only with his lieutenants. On Aug. 30 the first gleam of success lit up their standards. Vandamme was surrounded at Kulm by Russians under Barclay de Tolly, and captured with half his forces. The net closed round the French. On Oct. 16 the allies hemmed them in at Leipzig. The Battle of the Nations lasted for three days. On the 18th Napoleon's cause was deserted by the Saxons; and on the morrow the remnant of his troops streamed out of the city's western gates. His rearguard was destroyed by the premature explosion of a bridge over the Elster. The noble Poniatovski perished there, and with him the last hope of a regenerated Poland under Napoleon's protection. Leipzig was the grave of

French dominion in Germany. The defeated Emperor fell back on the Rhine, crushing the renegade Bavarians who sought to bar his retreat at Hanau (Oct. 30, 1813).

The allied sovereigns met in Congress at Frankfort to decide on their course of action. It soon became evident that they were animated by very different designs. Austria dreaded the preponderance of Russia, and did not desire Napoleon's absolute ruin. Great Britain longed to end a struggle which was ruining her trade and exhausting her exchequer in subsidies. Bernadotte, not content with the reversion of Sweden and the acquisition of Norway, dreamt of succeeding his former chief on the throne of France. Alexander, however, was steadfast to the cause of Europe, and he was supported by Stein, Blücher, and Gneisenau. The intrigues of his allies led to the offer of very liberal conditions to Napoleon—the restriction of his Empire to its geographical boundaries, the Rhine and the Pyrenees. On the rejection of these overtures, the allies determined to invade France in three great divisions, which were to converge on Paris. The Army of the North, under the Crown Prince of Sweden, overran Holland and Belgium; that of Bohemia traversed Switzerland and aimed at the city of Troyes; the army of Silesia crossed the Rhine between Mannheim and Coblenz and concentrated on Nancy. Alexander, on entering French soil, issued a proclamation breathing the noblest sentiments to his troops. "Soldiers," he exclaimed, "we have saved our native land and given independence to Europe. It remains to crown this achievement with the long-desired peace; to restore to every state its own laws, its government, religion, arts, sciences, and commerce. This is our object, and not the continuance of warfare. The enemy invaded our soil and wrought great evil; they have suffered an awful punishment. Let us not imitate their example. Let us forget their misdeeds, and return them, not vengeance and hatred, but friendship and a hand stretched out in peace. Soldiers, I trust that you will

crown your exploits by keeping stainless your reputation—that of a brave and moral people !”

Napoleon's genius for war never shone so brightly as during the campaign of 1814. He could place but 200,000 men in the field, mostly raw recruits, to oppose half-a-million invaders. Wellington had crushed his lieutenants in Spain and was crossing the Pyrenees. His position seemed desperate; but it was well-nigh retrieved by the lightning strokes which he dealt at each of the advancing armies in succession. He beat the army of Silesia at St Dizier and Brienne, and on February 1, 1814, he fell on Blücher and Schwartzberg at La Rothière. The battle was decided by Alexander, who brought up his grenadiers to support Blücher, sorely pressed, and carried the key of the French position at the bayonet's point. Napoleon fell back on the left bank of the Seine; and, but for divided counsels, the Allies might have marched directly on Paris. The conference was transferred from Frankfort to Châtillon, Feb. 5; and the Powers now refused to grant peace on any other terms than the confinement of France to the boundaries of 1791. Though the junction of the Silesian and Bohemian armies was assured by La Rothière, they separated, to advance on the capital by the lines of the Seine and the Marne. Napoleon's eagle eye detected the blunder. He flung himself on Blücher's left flank at Champaubert. Encouraged by their Tsar's presence, the Russian division repelled a charge of cuirassiers in square, and moved from the field without losing a prisoner. But Champaubert was a defeat for the allies, who retreated to Châlons. These sledge-hammer tactics were repeated. Blücher was beaten at Montmirail and Vauchamps (Feb. 11—14), and hurled back on the Army of the North. Other successes against the invaders' isolated columns came in quick succession: and they began to despair of reaching Paris.

Schwarzenberg, indeed, advocated a general retreat, but Alexander declared that sooner than draw back he would

separate from the Coalition and lead his Russians to their goal. Stirred by this splendid moral courage King Frederick William III threw in his lot with his friend; but the Austrians retired to Langres to await reinforcements. The cause of Europe was saved by the Tsar's firmness and Blücher's genius for war. With the aid of 100,000 men who joined him from the Northern Army during a truce, the veteran Field Marshal captured Soissons on March 3, thus turning the scale against the French. Then he obtained a partial success against Napoleon himself at Craonne (March 7), and defeated Marmont at Laon (March 9), a Russian army-corps leading the attack.

Alexander strove to bring the negotiations at Châtillon to a close by sending thither as his representative Razumovski, a sworn foe of the French Emperor. The allies again insisted on a return to the boundaries of 1791. When Napoleon's delegate, Caulaincourt, refused to surrender Antwerp, which was a perpetual thorn in England's side, and put forward absurd counter-propositions, the Conference broke up. Anticipating such a result the Allies had already entered into the Treaty of Chaumont (March 1), which was subsequently ratified at Vienna. It is an important link in the chain of engagements leaguering Europe against Napoleon. Kalicz, Reichenbach, and Töplitz united Russia, Austria, and Prussia. At Chaumont the adhesion of Great Britain constituted a Quadruple Alliance. Each of the Powers agreed to maintain 150,000 men in the field; and Great Britain promised to aid the common cause by large subsidies. But Chaumont was much more than a pact intended to bring the war to a successful issue. It bound the Allies to render mutual assistance should any of them be attacked during the next twenty years: while a secret convention federated Germany, and united Holland and Belgium under the Prince of Orange.

A radical change in strategy followed this solid understanding. Alexander was disgusted with the conduct of the

war, which gave full scope to Napoleon's system of crushing isolated forces in detail. At his suggestion the armies of Bohemia and Silesia united, forming a mass 200,000 strong, which Napoleon was powerless to deflect from its march on Paris. The first-fruits of the new plan of campaign was a victory of the Allies at Arcis-sur-Aube (March 20). Then Napoleon, instead of throwing himself into Paris, moved to the invaders' rear at St Dizier, intending to cut their communications with the Rhine. For a moment they hesitated. Barclay de Tolly counselled a retrograde movement in pursuit of the Emperor; Alexander urged an immediate advance on the capital. His view prevailed. Disregarding some slight successes won in their rear by Napoleon, the Russians and Prussians pressed forwards. On March 30, 1814, they came in sight of the Dome of the Invalides, recently gilt by Napoleon in imitation of those of Moscow. They found Marshals Marmont and Mortier strongly entrenched on Montmartre with 35,000 men and 130 guns. Should they wait for the lagging Austrians? Alexander decided on immediate action; for the capital was in arms, and its citizens were erecting barricades which might cost the besiegers dear. The Tsar was the soul of the attack, the brunt of which fell on the Russian troops. His Cossacks penetrated the Faubourg St Antoine. Belleville was carried; and 300 cannon were planted on its heights, whence they could search the streets below. The defenders, hopelessly outnumbered, threw themselves on the mercy of the Allies; and at 2 A.M. on March 31 Alexander's orders to discontinue hostilities were obeyed by 100,000 men. The Marshals were permitted to leave Paris with the remnant of their troops; and the decision was a wise one, for what could 20,000 dispirited men effect against 300,000 in possession of the capital?

On the same morning the Allies marched into Paris amid the shouts of the citizens. The Russian army was kept under severe control; and the soldiers strolled on the Boulevards, paying extravagantly for their purchases, like British seamen

ashore. Men from the far East followed the great White Tsar's standards; Sir Walter Scott saw among them horsemen from the neighbourhood of the Great Wall, armed with bows and arrows. In this motley host the memory of the destruction of Moscow was strong; and it needed the presence of the Autocrat to deter them from retaliation. Thenceforward France felt ashamed of the Napoleonic system of pillage. To Alexander are largely due the more civilised conceptions of warfare which Europe now observes. Learning that Talleyrand's house in the Rue St Florentin was the centre of enlightened French opinion, he proceeded thither and strove to ascertain the wishes of the country as to its future government. He declared publicly that France must set an example of constitutional liberty: that the era of war and conquest through which Europe had passed resembled the darkest ages of barbarism rather than the nineteenth century. The restoration of the Bourbons was distasteful to him: for he knew that they had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing. A pact with Napoleon was still less desirable. His unquenchable ambition would again drown Europe in bloodshed as soon as the marvellous recuperative power possessed by France should assert itself. The decision of this momentous question was left with the French Senate, whom Alexander invited to form a provisional government. It was now that Talleyrand's genius for diplomacy came into play. He persuaded the allied sovereigns that French liberties would be secure under a prince who had gained wisdom in adversity. He induced the Senate to decree the fall of Napoleon's dynasty, and to proclaim Louis XVIII King of France, on condition that he swore fidelity to the Constitution of 1791.

In the meantime the dethroned Emperor was making frantic efforts to restore his fortunes. After a vain attempt to overtake the armies of invasion in their march on Paris, he halted at Fontainebleau with the remnants of his own. Thence he sent Caulaincourt to Alexander, with power to

offer any terms if only he might be permitted to retain the crown. The emissary was told that the time for negotiation was past. On hearing the Senate's resolutions, Napoleon planned an attack on Paris. But his marshals perceived the folly of sacrificing the interests of all to those of a single man; and his appeals fell upon deaf ears. In desperation he sent the Senate a formal abdication of the throne (April 11, 1814) on behalf of himself and his dynasty. Alexander dealt generously with the fallen foe. His allies urged that Napoleon should be kept in durance at St Helena, Corfu, or Corsica; but Alexander insisted on his retaining the imperial title, with the sovereignty of the island of Elba and a civil list of £100,000. Without consulting Great Britain, the three Sovereigns concluded a treaty with Napoleon securing to him this little realm. Thither he was sent under the escort of Count Shuvalov, whom the Tsar warned that he should answer with his life for a hair which fell from the Emperor's head.

On May 3 Louis XVIII made his state entry into Paris. Alexander visited him at once and urged him to adopt a constitutional system of government. The advice was coldly received; and the new king refused to sign the Charter presented to him by the Senate. But Alexander was peremptory. The Charter must be accepted before his own departure from Paris. After a fruitless protest King Louis sullenly complied. It now became necessary to establish peace by a treaty. Here again Alexander stood forth as the friend of France. The Austrians and Prussians wished to see her humbled to the dust; and the Emperor Francis claimed Alsace and Lorraine as his share of the spoils. Alexander saw that the European equilibrium could not be maintained if France were unduly weakened; and his statesmanlike views prevailed. The Treaty of Paris, executed on May 30, 1814, restricted the French boundaries to those of 1791, and supplemented that of Chaumont by the creation of a supreme tribunal for deciding international disputes. Under the last article the

contracting Powers bound themselves to hold conferences for the consideration of measures necessary for the preservation of peace and for the prosperity of each nation. A clause inserted at the demand of Great Britain declared that no member of Napoleon's family should ever be recognised as the sovereign of France.

Alexander's magnanimity made him the idol of the French people. It is, indeed, impossible to overrate the energy and steadfastness displayed by him in the campaign of 1814. Under a sense of the responsibility which rested on him, his habitual indecision vanished; and he took the helm with a manful grasp. To dictate terms in the capital of an enemy who had devastated his own, to hold the fate of the recent arbiter of Europe in his hands—this was surely enough to intoxicate a man of ordinary mould. Alexander rose morally superior to his contemporaries; while the material strength which he directed inspired them with awe and jealousy.

He left Paris on June 2 for London. The lower classes of that capital received him with enthusiasm; and all hearts were won by the graces of his person and manner. He was pursued everywhere by state papers connected with the administration of Russia; but he rose early and devoted every available hour to examining the peculiar institutions of a country with whose history he had a thorough acquaintance. A Quaker deputation encouraged his dreams of a perpetual peace: and the Bible Society convinced him that missionary effort should be supported and the Scriptures placed in his people's hands. The Prince Regent, however, made an unfavourable impression which was never dispelled. In person and habits he was his guest's antithesis; and the protracted symposia of Carlton House were intolerable to one whose time was so fully occupied.

It has been truly said that a Tsar of Russia should rarely leave his empire, for its social and political life is almost at a standstill in his absence. When Alexander returned to



St Petersburg he was hailed by all classes with delirious joy ; and the Senate offered him the title "Sent by Heaven," which he modestly declined. He found that widespread abuses had grown up during the previous years, and that the western provinces were a desert.

His first care was to restore a semblance of order to the administration. All debts to the Crown exceeding 2,000 roubles were remitted ; and the devastated governments were relieved from the poll-tax. But the Tsar's stay in his capital was curtailed by the necessity of attending a Congress convoked at Vienna under the Treaty of Paris. Count Rumiantzov, an elderly Maecenas who filled the office of Foreign Minister, should have accompanied him thither ; but, as he was deeply implicated in the policy of Tilsit, his portfolio passed to Count Nesselrode and Capodistrias. The first was a scion of noble Rhenish family, well versed in diplomacy, but of a weak and pliable nature. His colleague was a Corfiote and devoted to the cause of Greece. Alexander's other councillors at the Congress were Prince Adam Czartoryski, the diplomat Razumovski, and Pozzo di Borgo. The last-named was a Corsican, who hated Napoleon fiercely and contributed more even than Talleyrand to his ruin ; but his talents and genius for intrigue were neutralised by the lack of personal weight. In the coming struggle with the keenest intellects of Europe, Alexander relied on his own resources.

The Congress opened soon after his arrival at Vienna, on Nov. 1, 1814 : and the crowd of kings and diplomatists which flocked thither to decide the fate of Europe met with a splendid réception from the Austrian Court. Their host was the Emperor Francis, whose family instincts were stronger than his intellect ; but his realm was virtually ruled by its Foreign Minister, Prince Clement Metternich. This statesman's profound knowledge of affairs was warped by the hide-bound feudalism in which he had been reared ; his diplomacy was alloyed by subterfuge. During his long career Austria's

domestic policy was fanatically conservative; while jealousy of Russia influenced her in all international questions.

Metternich found a congenial spirit in Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, Prince of Benevento, who championed the cause of France. His is, perhaps, the most enigmatic character recorded in history. A stubborn patriot, yet selfish and corrupt, amazingly clever and versed in all the secrets of courts and statecraft, yet prone to take wrong estimates of the trend of events, he was an epitome of the virtues and vices of his class. The pair soon divined the besetting weakness of the British plenipotentiary, Viscount Castlereagh, and won his constant support by playing on his vanity. On the other hand King Frederick William, a weak and hesitating character, was naturally attracted by the strength of Alexander.

The Tsar's liberal instincts led him to countenance the aspirations of the people of Germany. That country had never recovered from the ruin wrought by the Thirty Years' War; and its political ideals lagged far behind the culture attained by the educated classes. But a leaven was at work which has not yet spent its force. The Princes had promised to grant free institutions in return for their subjects' help in the struggle with Napoleon. When the incubus was banished, these pledges were forgotten. On the eve of starting for Vienna, Alexander learnt from his ambassador at Berlin that Germany was in a volcanic state, and that she looked to the Congress for protection against domestic tyranny. These hopes were defeated by Metternich's intrigues. He convinced his colleagues that the old order of things, rudely shaken as it had been by the French Revolution, must be restored in its integrity. Europe, in fact, was not ripe for the reception of liberal ideas. Great Britain had wrought her political salvation with blood and tears: but the mediæval slough still clung to the other monarchies of the West. The Congress offered a disgusting scene of hypocrisy and greed. Under the elaborate ceremonial and the high-sounding phrases in which

its acts were veiled, there lurked a fierce desire to participate in the spoils of the vanquished. Hardly had the sessions begun when the illustrious Stein reminded Alexander of the pledges given by him at Kalisz, and implored him to come to the aid of Germany. It behoved the allied Powers, he said, to give her civil freedom, to limit the sovereignty of her petty tyrants, and to guarantee the rights of every citizen. The Tsar was moved by this eloquent appeal. He had embraced a project mooted in the Congress—to secure a lasting peace by establishing a tribunal of arbitration: and he felt that domestic reform must precede an attempt to supersede appeals to brute force in international disputes.

But these dreams were thrust aside by the Polish question. Alexander had promised the veteran Kosciusko to give Poland autonomy and freedom. He was confirmed by Czartoryski in a resolve to restore her ancient grandeur, and he even contemplated the retrocession of Lithuania, Podolia, and Volhynia, which had been torn from her by partition or conquest. In Poland, perhaps, he would find the germ of the free institutions which he meditated granting to Russia. Other motives lay behind this generous impulse. Had Alexander foreseen the intense jealousy which his preeminence excited in his allies' hearts, he would not have urged Germany to rise against her tyrant, nor would he have allowed the chief command in the final struggle to be in Austrian hands. Were the Duchy of Warsaw to remain under foreign influence, it would serve as a rallying-point for manœuvres adverse to Russia. No course lay open to the Tsar but to extend his western frontiers until Moscow should be protected against any future invader.

Alexander's vehement championship of Poland was highly unpopular at home. His Russian subjects remembered that their ancestors had once bowed the neck to the Polish yoke. Should an ancient foe, still bleeding from wounds contracted in an invasion of Russia, enjoy greater privileges than themselves? Alexander, however, stood firm. He found it easy to

come to terms with the King of Prussia, who was glad to be rid of the turbulent subjects assigned him by previous partitions of Poland. Alexander's proposal to compensate him at the expense of the King of Saxony, whose defection to Napoleon was unforgiven, received Frederick William's hearty support. Talleyrand and Metternich, however, offered a determined opposition both to the absorption of Saxony and to the restoration of the kingdom of Poland. Alexander clung to his plan with obstinacy, and displayed in his interviews with the Austrian delegate a degree of heat which was foreign to his gentle nature. The opposition was joined by Lord Castlereagh; and under the pressure which it exercised Frederick William wavered. Alexander reminded him that he had crossed the Vistula in 1813 in opposition to the entreaties of all his councillors, who would have left Prussia to her fate. The King yielded to his friend's impassioned words, and promised his support. With this encouragement the Tsar cut the Gordian knot by an armed intervention. Prince Repnin, who governed Saxony provisionally, was ordered to hand over the kingdom to Prussia, and march his forces to Warsaw. Thither the Tsarevich was despatched with instructions to summon Poland to rise in defence of her new-born liberties. Constantine's veneration for his elder brother led him to obey promptly. He entered Warsaw on Dec. 24, 1814, read the Constitution to the assembled magnates, and proclaimed Alexander King of Poland. The result was a secret treaty of alliance (Jan. 3, 1815) against Russia, which included Great Britain, Austria, France, Holland, and Southern Germany. Europe was on the brink of a general war.

The news of Napoleon's escape from Elba reached the Congress on March 5, 1815. It came as a thunderbolt on the disputants and led them to sink their differences in the face of a common danger. Alexander declared that he would be content with a portion of the ancient kingdom of Poland. Frederick William, not to be outdone in generosity, announced

that the cession of all Saxony was no longer desirable. The Duke of Wellington, who replaced Castlereagh, was attracted by Alexander's personality; and under his influence the animosity of England slackened. A scheme for the partition of Poland, submitted to the Powers by Metternich, secured the suffrages of all; and questions of detail were relegated to a Commission.

Meanwhile, Napoleon's triumphant progress, and his rival's flight from the Tuileries, increased the panic at Vienna; and Alexander was bitterly reproached by his allies for the misplaced magnanimity which permitted the general foe to reside within striking distance of France. But they knew that Russian help was essential to the common cause, and they dreaded the disclosure of the secret understanding. In point of fact Louis XVIII, in his nasty flight from the Tuileries, left on his table a copy of the Treaty, which Napoleon forwarded to the Russian Chargé d'Affaires in the hope of sowing discord between the Allies. Alexander could not conceal the indignation evoked by the discovery, but he felt that the crisis demanded oblivion for past offences. The disturber of the peace of Europe should suffer the consequences of his wrongdoing; with him no truce was possible. The Powers bound themselves to united action by a treaty signed on March 25, 1815. Shame for their detected treachery rendered Alexander's foes obsequious to fulfil his wishes; and no further time was lost in settling the affairs of Europe. The Congress of Vienna was brought to a close on June 9, 1815, by a final act, executed by all the Powers. Under its provisions the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, with three millions of inhabitants, became an autonomous kingdom under Alexander's rule. Posnania and Danzig reverted to Prussia; Austria gained Eastern Galicia; while Krakau became a republic under Austrian protection. The new King of Poland was left to settle her destinies. He gave her a constitution, biennial diets, liberty of the press, and a separate army; and he insisted on stipulations being inserted in the Treaties to the effect that Poles who passed under Austrian or Prussian rule should obtain representative institutions.

To Prussia were allotted 7,720 square miles which had belonged to the King of Saxony; and she regained other territories with a population of 5,362,000. Lombardy, Venetia, Dalmatia, and Tyrol, with nearly 10,000,000 inhabitants, passed under the House of Habsburg. The other changes have no bearing on Russian history, but it is worthy of remark that the Empire which had done the most to bring Napoleon on his knees received fewer solid advantages than any other Power. Her ruler believed the complete independence of the smaller German States to be incompatible with the maintenance of the balance of power, for their jealousies and weaknesses had always rendered them amenable to pressure from France. His aim was, therefore, to build up an Empire in Central Europe strong enough to resist aggression such as Napoleon's, and to gratify German republicanism by securing a constitution for each component state. These views were too advanced for his contemporaries; nor were they urged with the persistence which alone commands success.

The Congress broke up without arriving at any decision as to the internal government of Germany. It brought into being the Germanic Confederation, a loosely-knit association of states arranged with some regard for justice and the people's wish. But no guarantees whatever were exacted from the Princes, whose unhappy subjects were left under a régime of merciless repression.

Such were the chief provisions of the Treaties of Vienna. They bear traces of undue haste; they are based on dynastic rather than ethnological interests; and they are impregnated with the semi-feudal conceptions of the preceding century. But, with all its shortcomings, the Congress gave Europe thirty-three years of almost unbroken peace. It needed the stress of a contest for hegemony between Austria and Prussia to supersede the Germanic Confederation by an Empire which is a greater menace to the world's tranquillity than its predecessor.

## CHAPTER III.

### VACILLATION.

BEFORE the Congress broke up, Alexander settled the plan of operations against Napoleon, in concert with King Frederick William, Wellington, and Schwartzberg. The allied forces were again to cross the Rhine; the English and Prussians to advance through Belgium, the Russians and Austrians by way of Mayence; and all were to converge on Paris. On May 26 the Tsar left Vienna to join his three army-corps at Heidelberg. During a halt at Heilbronn he met a lady who was destined to play a great part in moulding European history. The Baroness Julia Krüdener belonged by birth to the Livonian nobility, and was the widow of a diplomat in the Russian service. In 1815 she was in her fifty-first year, but retained traces of uncommon beauty. Her intellectual gifts were not less conspicuous; and she was the authoress of a sentimental novel which won praise from Goethe. When her personal charms decayed, her ardent nature turned to piety and yearnings for the welfare of others. Joining the German evangelicals, she adopted their mysticism; and her days and nights were spent in prayer. Everywhere she was followed by crowds, who regarded her as an inspired prophetess. Alexander arrived at Heilbronn in no enviable mood. He knew that Europe blamed his Quixotic generosity for the escape of Napoleon. The political horizon was dark with storm-clouds: his resolve to liberate Poland had excited deep animosity at home; his sympathy with German aspira-

tions had borne no results ; and he was confronted with one of the gravest crises in history while in feeble health. His constitution was sapped by the prolonged strain of the conflict at Vienna ; and he suffered from repeated attacks of fever and erysipelas. In such a frame of mind and body he was peculiarly susceptible to religious impressions. The pupil of the Voltairean Laharpe had been converted by the flames of Moscow ; and the Bible was his companion in every campaign. But his soul, perplexed by doubts, obtained no solace from the ministers of his Church. He turned eagerly for comfort to Madame Krüdener. Her language at their first interview was uncompromising. She accused the Tsar of All the Russias of worldly pride, and told him that no peace was to be found until he sought it at the foot of the Cross. His intercourse with the English Quakers had prepared him for the mission of a female prophet. He accepted Madame Krüdener's reproaches with humility, and told the Empress Elizabeth that she had calmed the trouble which overshadowed his soul. On the following day he joined head-quarters at Heidelberg. Thither the new Egeria followed him, taking up her abode at a labourer's cottage, which was the scene of frequent prayer-meetings. After one of them Alexander confessed to Madame Krüdener that he doubted the expediency of the approaching war. Russia was not directly concerned in the issue at stake ; but he would gladly give his life to secure the peace of Europe.

Knowing by bitter experience that Napoleon would endeavour to overcome them in detail, the Allies resolved to defer the combined advance on Paris until their forces were concentrated. Alexander tarried at Heidelberg under cover of the Rhine, awaiting the arrival of his Guards. But this plan of campaign was dislocated by the rapid advance of the French Emperor, who attacked the nearest opposing armies in Belgium in the hope of crushing them and then dealing with the others in turn. History tells how this desperate scheme was defeated at Waterloo (June 18, 1815) by the



stubborn valour of the British troops and the timely arrival of Blücher. The news of Napoleon's second catastrophe opened the road to Paris. On July 10 Alexander reached the palace of the Elysée to find that the arch-enemy had fled, and, after a vain attempt to quit the country by sea, had thrown himself on the mercy of the Prince Regent of Great Britain.

In the meantime Louis XVIII returned from his refuge at Ghent and took possession of the throne of his ancestors. He met Alexander in a spirit very different from that displayed during the former occupation of Paris. His apologies were profuse; and he expressed a wish to be guided entirely by his protector's advice. Louis's pliancy was due to the knowledge that he was not, and never had been, the idol of his people; and that the Prussian forces which held his capital in their grip were more to be dreaded than Napoleon had ever been. They had suffered long years of degradation and mental torture under the invader's heel, and were disposed to wreak vengeance on his hapless countrymen. Blücher announced that he would levy a contribution of £40,000,000 on Paris, destroy the column in the Place Vendôme, and blow up the Bridge of Jena. He was deterred from executing the last threat by the action of the Tsar, who posted a regiment on the doomed structure. The Russian troops and those of Wellington were restrained from pillaging, and displayed the chivalry which forgets injuries and spares a helpless foe. But the whole Prussian army poured into the conquered country; and Austria sent thither a force larger than that of 1814, only to share in the spoil. Frederick William demanded Alsace and Lorraine: the Emperor Francis claimed a portion of French Flanders. The King of the Netherlands, not content with the acquisition of Belgium, insisted on the cession of Eastern Picardy. Every continental Power save Russia claimed an indemnity covering the expenses of the war and those entailed by the French occupation of their territory. These aspirations had the support of the British Government. They were

not shared by Wellington, for he agreed with Alexander in thinking it inexpedient to weaken France, whose maintenance as a great Power was essential to the European equilibrium. On the other hand it was not in Russia's interest that Prussia should have too secure a boundary on the west. For more than a century it had been the settled policy of the Tsars to maintain a footing in Central Europe as protector of the minor states, and to strengthen it by matrimonial alliances. Alexander wished that King Frederick William should stand in need of his support and remain his dependent. He pledged his word to Louis XVIII that France should retain Alsace and Lorraine. He put forward no claim to compensation for the losses inflicted during the French invasion, remarking that nothing could repay him for the destruction of Moscow.

By the Second Treaty of Paris (November 20, 1815) France was restricted to the frontiers of 1791, retaining only the small district of the Venaissin—the first acquisition of the revolutionary armies. The war indemnity of £32,000,000 demanded by the Allies was reduced at Alexander's intercession to £28,000,000. As security for payment it was agreed that 150,000 men, contributed by Russia, Great Britain, Austria, and Prussia, should occupy the French fortresses on the northern and eastern frontiers for five years, which might be reduced to three should the condition of the kingdom warrant its evacuation. The custody of Champagne and Lorraine was allotted to a Russian army-corps under Vorontzov. All the treasures of art ravished by Napoleon from German and Italian cities to enrich the Louvre were restored to their owners. The captive Emperor was relegated to British keeping; and under a treaty between the Powers, signed on August 2, 1815, he was sent to the lonely island of St Helena, whither commissioners of the allied Powers followed to ensure his suitable treatment.

Alexander's share in these momentous events was out of all proportion to the ill-developed resources of Russia. Alone he could never have crushed the Man of Destiny: but without

him the Continent would not have risen against its oppressor. His tenacity, when the Allies despaired of the common cause, led them to Paris and enabled them to dictate peace there. When Napoleon's escape from Elba called for fresh efforts, the Tsar was again the mainspring of the combined movement against him. The victory won by his vigour and persistence was crowned by a magnanimity worthy of the heroic age. For a brief period he was the arbiter of Europe; and the eyes of all turned to him for protection. Intrepid in danger, he held war in horror, and, conscious of the evils which afflicted the nation, he resolved to devote his remaining years to alleviating them. This design was defeated by Metternich's intrigues during the Congress, and by the unexpected escape of Napoleon. But Alexander's illusions were not dispelled by the selfish and reactionary aims which he detected at Vienna. He still hoped to give Europe free institutions and a durable peace.

This mental attitude was confirmed by the growing influence of Madame Krüdener, who followed the Allies to Paris and occupied a house near the Elysée, which attracted all the best elements of the cosmopolitan society collected by the general peace. Alexander attended her prayer-meetings, and in the devotional ardour evolved he took a step which proved a turning point in the world's history. The times seemed ripe for a public acknowledgement of the existence of a Higher Power. Men's minds were stirred to their depths by the drama unfolded by the French Revolution, the conquests of the First Empire, and the tragedy which brought it to a close. Though other countries were sunk in indifference or intolerance, the Greek Church retained some measure of vitality; and it recognised the kinship of mankind. Alexander resolved to use his power, not, as a ruler of the common mould, for self-aggrandisement, but to replace feudal and dynastic interests by precepts based on eternal justice. While in this exalted frame of mind, he drew up a solemn declaration of principle for the signature of his friends and allies. This document, which was

afterwards known as the Holy Alliance, is dated September 26, 1815, and is thus worded:—

“The Emperor of Austria, the King of Prussia, and the Emperor of Russia, by reason of the great events of the last three years and especially of the benefits which it has pleased God to lavish on the states whose rulers placed their confidence and hope in Him alone, are convinced that their mutual relations must be guided by the sublime truths taught by the Faith of God the Saviour. They solemnly declare that the only object of this Act is to manifest in the face of the Universe their unshaken resolve to base their conduct, whether in regard to their subjects or to other governments, on the teachings of religion—teachings of justice, charity, and peace, which should not be confined to private life, but should directly mould the resolves of princes, and guide their every action, as being the sole means of consolidating human institutions and remedying their imperfections....”

“Article I. Conformably with the words of the Holy Scriptures, which command all men to regard each other as brethren, the three contracting monarchs will continue to be united in bonds of true and indissoluble fraternity. Regarding each other as fellow-countrymen, they will lend mutual assistance and succour at every time and in every place. Deeming themselves to be fathers of a family in their relations with their subjects and armies, they will govern them in the same spirit of brotherhood....”

“II. To render mutual help and treat all men as members of one Christian nation being the cardinal principle of their dealings with each other and their subjects, the Allied Princes, regarding themselves as delegated by Providence to govern three branches of the same family, confess that the Christian realm to which they belong has in reality no other King save Jesus Christ.”

A third article recited that the signatories would welcome the adhesion of other European Powers.

Alexander laid the treaty before the Emperor Francis and King Frederick William in succession. The Emperor agreed with Metternich in thinking it a mere outburst of sentimental philosophy under the guise of religion. Seeing, however, that the Tsar's mind was bent on his scheme, and fearing to give him mortal offence, the Emperor appended his signature. The King of Prussia acceded with better grace; and the allies then sought the support of Great Britain. The British Constitution does not permit its sovereigns to enter into any such engagements; but even had the Prince Regent desired to pledge his government, he would probably have been restrained by Castlereagh's remark that the manifesto was a simple declaration of Biblical principle, which would have carried England back to the days of Cromwell's "Saints" and the Roundheads. Louis XVIII, however, joined the movement, which received the support of every Christian Power save Great Britain.

The publication of this curious document raised a storm of calumny. English Whigs detected therein a conspiracy against the liberties of Christendom. Many continental statesmen believed that it foreshadowed a resolve on Russia's part to seize Constantinople. It is a fact that the Sultan expressed suspicions of a treaty from which he was excluded; but they were set at rest by a circular issued by the Russian Foreign Office in March 1816, which averred that it was based on purely Christian dogma. Though the Holy Alliance was the fruit of an honest wish to institute a religious and constitutional government of the world, Metternich was not slow in perceiving its value as a weapon in the hands of reaction. Alexander alone preserved a sense of its original signification. He alone reckoned it his duty to give his allies "assistance and succour at every time and in every place"; and his successor Nicholas I followed in his footsteps. For nearly half a century the Holy Alliance was the keystone of the edifice erected at Vienna, the hidden chain which linked Russia with the other military Powers.

Russia now claimed her long-absent sovereign. His progress through Europe was one long ovation. At Berlin he was joined by the young Grand Duke Nicholas, whose betrothal to the Princess Charlotte of Prussia was announced at a royal banquet by Frederick William. The bride-elect had been Queen Louisa's mainstay in her affliction and filled her mother's place in the bereaved home. She had many accomplishments and was better suited to a great position than the timid Elizabeth. In announcing this love-match to a relative, Alexander contrasted his brother's lot with his own. "My marriage," he wrote, "was settled while I was a mere stripling and scarcely knew what a solemn act it was. Indeed, though I was united to a beautiful and amiable princess, she had not captivated my heart. I did not choose her as a companion for life—that was my grandmother's doing.... Catherine had, doubtless, good political reasons for her conduct; but the Empress and myself have been the sacrifice."

His first thought was for the welfare of Poland. Czartoryski and Novossiltzov preceded him to Warsaw, in order to introduce the new constitution. Russian officials were gradually withdrawn, and were replaced by men of native birth. The Polish army received an organisation which it had never enjoyed under Napoleon's standards. On arriving at the Polish capital (November 10, 1815) the new King was hailed with enthusiasm: and all classes vied with each other in doing honour to him who had restored the political existence of their country. To the universal disappointment he ordered that his successor should be the first King of Poland to be crowned at Warsaw. The Constitution was promulgated. It placed supreme power in the Sovereign's hands, and was calculated to prevent a recrudescence of the anarchy which had resulted from contests between the nobles of the ancient kingdom. He was aided by a Senate and a Diet; the first composed of the bishops and of noblemen appointed for life by the King; the second of deputies elected by the feudal

aristocracy and commons. These chambers were to assemble biennially, in order to frame laws and examine the budget. It was agreed between Alexander and his advisers that the Diet should not be convoked for three years, so that Poland might have time to recover from an exhausting war. The press was free; the nobility had the right of electing their own marshals; and a municipality was established in every town. Kosciusko was offered the Viceroyalty and the command of the army; but he pleaded advancing years as an excuse for his refusal. Czartoryski hoped to secure the post; but he had to content himself with a seat in the Council of Ministers who governed in the King's absence. His relative Novossiltzov was the only Russian member of that body. The first Viceroy was General Zaionchek, who had grown grey in battle and was devoted to his country's cause; while the command of the army was confided to the Tsarevich Constantine, whose office was subordinated to the civil power. Alexander, knowing his brother's violence of character, was anxious to accustom him to constitutional methods, in the vague hope that he would pursue them on succeeding to the Russian throne. Every means was taken to give Poland a prosperous career as a limited monarchy; and Alexander left Warsaw for St Petersburg in the assurance that his generous experiment would be crowned with success.

The events of 1813-15 had carried the prestige of Russia to an unexampled height. But never did an Empire pay more dearly for a proud position. In material respects Russia had suffered more than any European country. For seventeen years she had hardly known a month's unbroken peace; the central and southern provinces were laid waste; and the national resources were crippled by the cost of maintaining the vast forces which swelled the tide of western invasion. Her power of recovering from such blows was less than that of other states. Her ports were blocked with ice for half the year; and no crowd of foreign visitors came to spend fortunes in her cities.

The Slav character is capable of gigantic efforts, but prone to suffer from the resulting reaction. Murmurings were heard amid the shouts of joy which welcomed Alexander's return. His extreme partiality for Poland excited resentment throughout Russia ; and his unpopularity was increased by erroneous conceptions taken of the Holy Alliance. Doubts were felt as to the sincerity of the Tsar's liberalism when he declared his intention to maintain the autocratic power intact. They were confirmed by his appointment of Count Arakchiev to exalted posts on the army staff. As months went by, this man gained control over every branch of the administration. He won Alexander's confidence by fidelity to the memory of his father, Paul I, and by the unbounded respect which he professed for the genius of the son. His virtues were an immense capacity for work and a love for discipline which became pedantic. But he was unfitted to guide the policy of an Empire which, but for his malign influence, might have entered on a path of constitutional reform. He was the born enemy of new ideas, the apostle of absolute power and passive obedience. His appearance was repulsive, his manners cold, ignoble, and cunning. Arakchiev gradually stifled the inborn affection of the Russian people for their Tsar, and paved the way for a movement fraught with peril for his country.

After settling the affairs of Poland, Alexander turned his attention to finance. The Empire was groaning under the worst evils entailed by a forced paper currency. The war had necessitated the issue of notes amounting to 836,000,000 roubles in nominal value, which circulated at a discount of 75 per cent. Commerce was paralysed ; and acute distress was endured by officers of government, who were paid in a depreciating medium. A ukase of 1816 founded the Commercial Bank at St Petersburg with an advance of 30,000,000 roubles. The assistance thus rendered to trade was supplemented by a vast export of corn, to meet a scarcity in western Europe ; and the resulting influx of silver enabled the Minister of Com-



merce to liquidate a loan of 20,000,000 roubles advanced by the Imperial Bank. By a ukase of April 1817 twice that amount was assigned from the state and personal revenues to meet similar obligations contracted during the invasion. In the same month a loan of 150,000,000 roubles was successfully floated; and the proceeds were employed in withdrawing an equivalent amount of paper-money from circulation. It was anticipated that the rise in exchange-value of the rest would lead to a proportionate increase in the net receipts from taxation. These hopes were not realised. The paper rouble, indeed, fell slightly; and a floating debt which carried no interest was converted into one funded at six per cent. Such was the origin of Russia's national debt, which has enabled her to tide over deficits and to cover the Empire with a network of railways. In 1819 a second issue, carried out in Holland, was devoted to cancelling paper currency, notes to the value of 38,000,000 roubles being publicly burnt. At the same time a pledge was given that no further attempt would be made to establish an inconvertible currency medium.

The standing army involved a crushing burden on the Imperial exchequer. At the close of the war with Napoleon it was 560,000 strong, with an effective reserve of 260,000 and an unnumbered horde of half-drilled militia (*opolchenie*). To reduce its strength would be to fill the country with masterless men and bring about a recrudescence of the brigandage which dogs the steps of war. Nor were political motives wanting to prompt the maintenance of this huge machine in high efficiency. Alexander had an inherited love of military pomp, and much of his time was devoted to reviews and inspections. The jealousy shown by his allies during the campaign of 1814 and at the Vienna Congress convinced him that Russia's position as a great Power rested on her army.

A collision with Turkey seemed inevitable. The Treaty of Bucharest (1812), which gave the Tsar the right to maintain a military road on the Black Sea coast for revictualling the

chain of fortresses, was still unratified by the Sultan. Russia, too, had failed to comply with the terms of Article 6, which bound her to restore certain strong places which she had seized. The dispute was sedulously kept alive; and three years after Alexander's death it led to a declaration of war with Turkey. But generous motives were ever at work in Alexander's complex nature. Liberation was the dream of his life; and every serf who joined the colours as a recruit became *ipso facto* free. He strove to lessen the ignorance which hampered the Empire's progress by making the regimental system a nucleus of public instruction. In 1818, 46,000 soldiers' children were educated at state expense; and every corps had its school for adults. The scientific training of the officers was provided by Staff Colleges, which soon made the Russian army a model in this respect for the other military Powers. Thanks to the Tsar's perseverance and the ruthless severity of Arakchiev, the soldiers' hospitals attained a degree of efficiency undreamt of elsewhere.

Talleyrand once remarked that the cardinal difference between Russia and the rest of Europe was that she worked for the future; her neighbours only for the present. Alexander's chief anxiety was to secure peace and prosperity for his successors. He believed that he had formed the germ of a cheap and efficient army when, by a ukase of August 1817, he founded the first military colony. His scheme was not only theoretically flawless; it was, to some extent, based on national instinct. Communism was still alive among the peasantry and troops; for village elders made a periodical division of the lands assigned by the landlords for the serfs' maintenance, while soldiers were wont to place their pittances in a common fund. The Cossack organisation, which had proved a bulwark against invasion from the South, sprang from a military republic. It seemed axiomatic that colonisation, under official control, would bring waste lands under cultivation, and reduce the expense and hardships entailed by the vast distances traversed

by recruits in the depth of winter. The peasantry would receive the germs of order and education; and the pangs of parting between parent and child would be lessened. Colonisation would, in time, obviate the loss sustained by Russia in the removal of thousands of young men from the duties of civil life. It would improve the discipline of the army by implanting inherited aptitudes for obedience and order.

The experiment began in selected villages belonging to the Crown. Every peasant over fifty was styled a "Master Colonist," and given a well-built brick house and a few head of cattle. On each household a soldier was quartered, who was bound to work on his host's farm in the intervals of military duty, from which he was exempt at ploughing and harvest time. If the master colonist were childless, his boarder succeeded to the farm, and in his turn admitted a soldier-partner. Colonists were freed from the poll-tax; their villages were given a pure water supply, a church, a school, and a hospital at state expense. All children born in a military colony were reckoned as belonging to the battalion which composed it; they wore uniforms and were regularly drilled. Adults were compelled to attend the regimental school; and the whole colony was placed under the supervision of the commanding officer.

The first regiment thus treated was one of Grenadiers, stationed at Novogorod; and the system was rapidly extended to the western governments, as well as those of the south, where it clashed with the peculiar organisation of the Cossacks. Public opinion was against the experiment from the first; though the bitterest critics admitted that the cleanliness and quiet beauty of the colonies were in marked contrast with the unreformed Russian village. It needed all Alexander's persistency, and his disregard for private interests when national reforms were at stake, to secure a fair trial to the system. A certain measure of success attended it. Before the close of the reign 60,000 men and 30,000 horses were domiciled with

400,000 Crown peasants. The lowest calculation assumed that, in thirty years, Russia would possess 3,000,000 colonist soldiers. But the designer, in his zeal for change, disregarded the personal equation. The Russian peasant was intensely conservative; he was impatient of any control save that of the landlord and the commune, and regarded idleness as a greater blessing than freedom. And the tact was wanting which alone could wear down his obstinacy. Arakchiev, who was the Tsar's right arm in this and every other domestic measure, made colonisation odious in the eyes of the people by his harshness and excessive regard for details. The master colonists were heart-broken when they were ordered to shave their cherished beards and replace the blouse by a stiff uniform. They rebelled against the supersession of the village government by military power, and the necessity laid upon them of registering every occurrence on their little farms. The general exasperation was revealed in a reply made by a colonist to a parish priest who was expatiating on the horrors of hell-fire. He was not afraid of them, he said, for he already suffered worse torments upon earth. While Arakchiev remained in power, the peasants' resistance was passive; but after the succession of Nicholas I (1833) revolts occurred in the military colonies, which led him to doubt the soundness of his brother's policy. They languished until their death-blow came in the reforms carried out by General Miliutin, Minister of War, under Alexander II.

Arakchiev's influence led Alexander into collision with the Church of Rome. During the stress of warfare the Jesuits had gained a secure footing in both capitals, and won many converts among the nobility. Now the Greek Church is, in principle, the most tolerant in the world; but its forbearance was sorely tried by the intruders' assertion that heaven could be gained only by entering their pale. Photii, Archimandrite of the great Monastery of St George, was Arakchiev's confessor, and wielded enormous power over his narrow, superstitious mind. At his instigation a campaign was opened against the

Jesuits by a ukase of January 1816, which banished them from St Petersburg. This measure was attended by a scrupulous regard for their comfort; and the landed property left by the Fathers was purchased at its full value. In March 1820, however, another ukase appeared, expelling the Jesuits from the Empire. It recited that the toleration extended to them had been abused; that they had sapped the belief of children entrusted to their care, and carried on an active propaganda among the German colonists of the south, the Jews, and the pupils of the state colleges. Their possessions were, at the same time, assigned to the support of the Roman Catholic Church.

This severity widened the gulf which separated the Tsar from the large section of the nobility whose education and experience placed them in sympathy with western ideals; on the other hand, the Old Russian or conservative party were shocked by the support which he gave to the British Bible Society, with whose cause he had become familiar during his visit to London in 1814. A few weeks after the first expulsion of the Jesuits, a rescript, addressed to the Holy Synod, recommended the issue of a translation of the Scriptures, hitherto veiled in a language unintelligible to the laity. A Russian version was published, which was so eagerly bought up that the expense was more than covered. Among the purchasers were the dissident sects; and the orthodox had another grievance in the protection accorded to them. In a few years the Bible Society had 280 branches at work in the Empire; and Scottish missionaries laboured among the heathen of Siberia at Alexander's expense. This support of an alien creed stirred the fanatical Photii to remonstrance; and it is very characteristic of the Tsar's nature that he should have visited the monastery of St George, and prostrated himself in the chapel with the Archimandrite and Arakchiev. But he strove to maintain peace between contending theologians; and his broad tolerance served as a bulwark to Protestants and Dissenters alike against the attacks of the extreme section of the National Church.

Chief among the social questions which occupied Alexander's thoughts was the emancipation of the serfs. He felt that Russia was unfit for free institutions while 40,000,000 of her children were regarded as chattels. Serfdom was of comparatively recent date; and its origin differed widely from that of all similar institutions. At a time when the country was divided into independent states, and the princes of Moscow were but first among equals, the peasant's condition was one of freedom. The male population was ranged in two classes—*Muji*, or "complete men," who were warriors in the service of the Prince; and the tillers of the soil, styled *Mujiki*, a diminutive expressing contempt. The first code of Ivan III (1497) recognised one of the days sacred to St George, which falls on November 26, as the date when peasants might leave their lord's service for another's. Towards the close of the sixteenth century the tide of Tatar invasion had been rolled back, and vast tracts on the Don and the Volga and in Siberia lay open to colonisation. Thither set in a stream of emigration; and the scanty population of Russia seemed about to lose itself in the interminable steppes. The ill-knit empire of the Tsars was locked in a death-struggle with the Teutonic Knights, and a little later with Poland; and this dispersion of its people tended to lower Russia's military strength at a crisis when every man was required. The process was stayed by a simple police ordinance. A ukase of the Tsar Feodor, son of Ivan the Terrible, in 1593, took from the peasant his right to migrate on St George's Day. In 1601 the chain was drawn more tightly by Boris Godunov, the usurper who succeeded Feodor; and in 1648 a decree of the Tsar Alexis swept away the last traces of peasant liberty. Heavier fetters were added by Peter the Great. The landlords became hereditary servants of the state, charged with the police administration, the recruitment of the army, the collection of taxes—in short, every function of local government. Serfdom thenceforward was a part of the state machine, and it took firm root.

Moscow was the centre of this highly artificial system. It was unknown in the lake regions to the north; and in southern Russia the Cossack organisation restrained its spread. Tatars, German colonists, and Finns were free; nor did serfdom extend to Little Russia and the left bank of the Dniepr before the reign of Catherine II. The distinction was the more galling because master and bondsmen were of the same blood. On the western frontier Russian serfdom existed side by side with that of Poland—a far more ancient institution, and one rendered less illogical by racial differences. Similar conditions prevailed in the Baltic Provinces, where the serfs were Finns or Letto-Lithuanians, while the masters were Germans, descended from the aggressive Teutonic Knights. The Russian peasant resigned himself to his lot with the fatalism and apathy of a downtrodden people; but he retained a dim sense of his dormant rights. “Our backs,” he used to say, “are our lords’; but the land is our own.” He never forgot that the ukases which robbed him of freedom imposed a corresponding obligation on his master to serve the Tsar. When Peter III rescinded the laws framed by his great namesake, which made all landed proprietors servants of the state, the peasants looked in vain for the ukase which was to restore their own lost liberties. To this blind instinct was due the rebellion of 1762, which followed the dethronement of Peter III by his consort the Empress Catherine. The same cause brought about a more formidable rising eleven years later, when a false Peter III appeared to finish the work of the Tsar. Napoleon’s unerring eye divined the weak point in the Russian Colossus. When the Grand Army poured into the Empire in 1812 he proclaimed that he had come to liberate the serfs. The glad news penetrated the dense masses of ignorance and degradation; and for a moment their allegiance to the national cause trembled in the balance. An invader had it in his power to stir up a servile and religious war. Again, when the tide of invasion turned westwards, many thousands

of militiamen, *opolchenie*, took part in the military operations in Germany and France, and returned to their homes with minds enlarged by contact with European civilisation. They became advocates of personal liberty, and spread discontent among the peasants and the army.

With Alexander emancipation became a ruling passion. But his inveterate tendency to centralise left him no leisure for so gigantic an enterprise; and it is doubtful whether Russia was sufficiently advanced to admit of its realisation. His policy, however, became widely known; and nobles who wished to pay him court had no more effective method of doing so than by granting freedom to their serfs. The Tsar strove to ameliorate the lot of the 16,000,000 peasants on crown domains. Under previous Tsars a successful general or imperial favourite was rewarded for services, real or supposed, by the grant of "souls," in other words by crown estates inhabited by a given number of serfs. Alexander discontinued this degrading practice. Hitherto the state inherited the property of heirless landowners. They were now permitted to will away their estates, provided they undertook to free their serfs. The Tsar was always accessible to complaints, and severely punished any landlord who was found guilty of tyrannical conduct. In 1819 he permitted peasants of all degrees to establish themselves in commerce and manufactures. About this time the German nobility of Kurland and Esthonia consented to the cessation of serfdom after fourteen years. In the interval the peasants were exempted from liability to sale; and their right to own property was recognised; but, as they received no land, they sank to the condition of hired labourers. In 1819 Alexander visited Riga, the capital of Livonia, and sanctioned an Act of Emancipation which the nobles had been induced to frame. "You have acted," he said, "in accord with the spirit of the age, and have discovered that liberal principles alone can form the basis of a people's happiness."

In his personal habits Alexander set the note of simplicity



which has since distinguished the imperial house. His favourite abode was the palace of Zarskoe-Selo, which stood in a park-like domain open to the public. Here he occupied two apartments. In the first was the bed, whence he rose at dawn—a narrow sofa, without curtains, sheets or blanket. The other displayed a small library, including the works of Sir Walter Scott, Thomas Moore, and Fénelon; several writing tables with a powerful eyeglass on each, ten quill-pens, which were never used twice, and a neatly folded handkerchief. So punctilious was his regard for order that he would tolerate no particle of dust, nor a paper on his desk which did not refer to the task in hand. All petitions received from subjects were placed on a table daily; and he gave a couple of hours to examining them with the aid of his secretaries. Those which demanded immediate attention were forwarded to him wherever he might be. He was averse from imperial pomp, and did not enjoy any of the amusements in vogue at European Courts; though his own Court displayed, on state occasions, the splendour which it retains. Nor did he indulge in wine and the pleasures of the table which played so great a part in social intercourse a century ago. His relaxations were long, solitary walks, and earnest discussion with some intimate friend, bent, like himself, on the regeneration of mankind. During the year which followed the restoration of peace, he was wont to visit one or two private families in turn, and engage in unrestricted conversation. Finding this practice misconstrued, he returned with a sigh to the splendid isolation imposed by his rank.

Though Alexander's affectionate nature pined for the joys of domestic life, these were unfortunately denied to him. The Empress Elizabeth lived apart from her husband. She had a quick tongue, and took no pains to win his heart. In 1816 her health gave way, and she passed the rest of her days in seclusion with two attendants, one of whom was Mrs Pitt, a lady of English birth. Her only other intimate was the historian Karamsin, who had quarters in her palace and was admitted

to read his rhapsodies aloud when the Empress was well enough to enjoy them. Alexander's chivalry led him to treat her with profound respect: and he nursed her tenderly in sickness, sitting up with her night after night, though well-nigh spent with incessant labour. His mother, the Empress Dowager, was cast in a very different mould. Ambitious, intriguing and fond of power, she was accused, rightly or wrongly, of having purposely destroyed the domestic happiness of her two elder sons, Alexander and Constantine, in order that Nicholas, the youngest, should succeed to the crown. She was the only member of the imperial family who maintained the ceremonial of a court: but her theatrical manners and youthful dress excited wonder in St Petersburg society. It was in vain that her masterful nature strove to acquire influence over Alexander, who distrusted his mother too profoundly to give her any share in his confidence.

His long absences and intense preoccupation in war had encouraged the growth of abuses in every department. Official salaries were on a humble scale, but they were not more lavish in Denmark, where the standard of public morality was high. The universal corruption in Russia was due to the love of gambling and extravagance which were among the many evil legacies of Catherine's reign. Alexander strove to form a loftier standard of duty; but the material resisted the workman. Always accessible to complaints of severity and oppression, he punished delinquents with a severity which became the measure of his officers' conduct towards their own subordinates. He remodelled every government of the Empire, conferring extensive powers on his lieutenants, while he insisted on their submitting periodical reports to himself. In 1819, learning that justice was perverted in Western Siberia, he sent his old Secretary of State, Count Speranski, to take charge of the immense province. The new Governor-General travelled throughout its length and breadth, and unearthed so many abuses that every governor but one was dismissed. After

seventeen months' labour Speranski returned to St Petersburg, and was directed to resume his studies for a digest of the Russian laws. Four years later the Tsar discovered that maladministration was again rife in Siberia. The inquiries promptly made led to the degradation of Pestel, Governor-General of the western section; and his fate was shared by two of his lieutenants and 678 inferior officers. The enormous distances, which the Tsar lamented as the greatest drawback to vigorous rule, had no terrors for him; and his incessant tours were effected at a speed of a hundred miles a day, in spite of execrable roads. In 1819 he journeyed through Finland, and pointed out the vast resources of water-power which were allowed to run to waste. To his foresight is due the foundation of Tammerfors, now known as the "Finnish Manchester." He was the first Tsar since Peter the Great to visit Archangel in the north, and to cross the Urals on a journey to Orenburg. Moscow, rising from her ashes, found the Tsar a frequent visitor and eager to assist in her regeneration. Her growth as a great manufacturing centre dates from his days; as does the rise of Odessa from a fishing village to a first-class port. The fatigues of these rapid progresses told heavily on his iron frame. While travelling through the country of the Don Cossacks his carriage was overturned, and he sustained severe injury to a leg. Sir James Wylie, a Scottish physician who had his entire confidence, implored the patient to remain in a recumbent position till the wound should heal. But he was in the habit of arranging the minutest detail of a tour beforehand, and stoutly declined to alter his programme. Erysipelas supervened; and the lowering diet prescribed in those days reduced his scanty stock of strength.

No physical suffering could induce Alexander to remove his hand from the helm. Hospitals and asylums were maintained by him on a scale unequalled in the West. Public instruction, too, was his peculiar care. The minister, Prince Galitsin, was an old associate who endeavoured to atone for youthful

extravagance by devoting himself to liberal ideas, not without a tinge of German illuminism. Under his fostering care the colleges and schools thrived amazingly. Alexander corresponded with the Duke of Kent on the Lancastrian system, and sent several young Russians to London to study the details prior to introducing it in secondary schools. Prison reform was another matter very near his heart. He was a disciple of Howard, to whose memory he erected a monument at Kherson, the goal of his last pilgrimage. Russian gaols became mere guarded barracks; and their inmates received every indulgence compatible with safe keeping. Capital punishment was restricted by ukase; and its place was taken by transportation to Siberia or the Ural mines. To provide against the recurrence of famines, rendered habitual in the Empire by the absence of good roads, he ordered magazines of corn to be established in every district. A commission was formed under the Tsar's uncle, the Prince of Würtemberg, charged with the maintenance of highways and bridges; and among its first labours was the construction of a macadamised road connecting the two capitals. The old wooden quays which lined the Neva at St Petersburg were replaced by structures of Finnish granite.

The contact of the Russian armies with western civilisation suggested a host of new requirements, and gave the whole nation a higher scale of comfort. The resulting development of foreign commerce was sedulously fostered by Alexander, who established manufactories of plate-glass, paper, and cottons on a splendid scale. He favoured the introduction of steamers on the Volga, and patronised every new invention. To him is due the first Import Tariff, which passed into law in 1819. It imposed a low scale of duties, and led to a glut of foreign goods. Towards the close of the reign, the number of English merchants residing at St Petersburg was estimated at 3000. In 1822 the balance of trade became so adverse to Russia that, in order to protect domestic industries, measures were taken which were characteristic of an age when political economy was

in its infancy. A turn was given to the fiscal screw, and the importation of refined sugar, flax and cotton fabrics, and manufactured copper was prohibited. In spite of these errors, and an excessive centralisation which failed to check abuses, Alexander conferred lasting benefits on Russia. Her evolution from an Asiatic to a European Power, commenced under Peter the Great, was consummated during the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

The Tsar's foreign policy was founded on the obligations undertaken by him in 1815. The Congress of Vienna remodelled the map of Europe; the Holy Alliance bound the military Powers together; and the Treaty of Paris provided for the settlement of international affairs by means of Congresses. The first of these gatherings took place at Aix-la-Chapelle in September, 1818. Its object was nominally to decide whether the French Government was sufficiently stable to admit of the withdrawal of the mixed army of occupation. This question, however, had already been decided in the affirmative. The Bourbons were firmly seated on the throne; and a group of bankers agreed to advance the remainder of the war indemnity. Alexander had no difficulty in inducing his allies to evacuate the French fortresses held by them. The real aim of the Congress was to enlarge the basis of the monarchical league against the principles then known as Jacobinism. Louis XVIII was invited to take part in the deliberations; and France thus regained her position as a great Power. At Alexander's bidding a supplementary protocol was added to the final Act passed at Aix-la-Chapelle, which established a Military Committee charged with organising a general armament, should occasion arise. This reactionary measure was due to the inspiration of Metternich, who met Alexander in daily intercourse at the Congress, and succeeded in overcoming the aversion engendered by his intrigues at Vienna. Disillusions followed in rapid succession to aid the malign influence exercised by the subtle foe of liberal ideas. Alexander had striven

to raise France from the dust ; he found her citizens plotting against him. A wild scheme among Napoleon's adherents was detected at Aix-la-Chapelle, which doomed to death every sovereign who had signed the Treaty of Paris. He had dreamed of educating his own subjects to be worthy of free institutions ; and evidence was given him that the Russian universities were honeycombed with secret societies.

Nor was the wreck of Alexander's generous projects the only fruit of contact with the civilisation of the West. During the stay of the Russian army of occupation in French territory the younger officers were courted by the Jacobin party, and absorbed doctrines which proved intoxicating for men reared under a despotism, ignorant of practical politics, and prone to vague longings for the good of humanity. They were repatriated by sea, and spread the revolutionary poison far and wide. Secret associations were very rife at this time on the Continent. Every Latin country had its ramifications of the Carbonari, a league established in Naples with a view of overturning French dominion. When that object was gained, the Carbonari launched out into more questionable designs, and plotted to compass the destruction of every ruling dynasty. The youth of Germany was exasperated by the princes' oblivion of the pledges to grant national liberties, made in a time of peril. The League of Virtue, which had arisen to combat French tyranny, now turned its energies against domestic oppressors. At this crisis Metternich issued a reactionary manifesto at the Diet of Ratisbon ; and the agitation rose to boiling point. In March, 1819, the poet Kotzebue, who was Alexander's agent and pensioner, was murdered by a student ; and his patron was led to believe that the blow was aimed at the principles of authority which he represented. In the autumn of this year he attended a second Congress, convoked at Carlsbad, to discuss the volcanic conditions prevalent in Germany. Metternich drew his toils more closely, and induced Alexander to approve of a series of resolutions tending to crush liberalism. Alexander returned

to St Petersburg in a very different mood from that in which he had quitted his capital for Carlsbad.

The condition of Poland was not calculated to revive his hope of inaugurating a constitutional régime. In 1818 he presided at the opening of the first Diet at Warsaw. Three years of unbroken peace had obliterated the traces of invasion; but the factious spirit of the nobility and the insubordination of all classes were as marked as ever. It was already doubtful whether Poland was sufficiently advanced to guide her own destinies. In a speech from the throne Alexander urged the delegates to "prove to contemporary kings that the liberal institutions, which they associated with doctrines threatening the entire social system with a frightful catastrophe, were not a dangerous illusion." But his Utopias were slow to disappear. He proclaimed an intention of annexing Lithuania, Podolia, Volhynia, and White Russia to Poland, and gradually extending her constitution to the Empire at large. This project elicited an indignant protest from the historian Karamsin, who denounced the dismemberment of Russia for the benefit of a conquered people. The only method, he exclaimed, of rendering Poland innocuous was to keep her powerless; for, the stronger she became, the fiercer would be her desire to break away from Russia. The Poles themselves were not slow to justify these auguries. The legislature was even more disorderly than in the days of native rule. It exercised the right to appeal to the sovereign on the most frivolous pretexts; and he was fain to admit that the nobles sought only a renewal of their oligarchy at the expense of the liberties of the people. The unrest was increased by disputes among the King's lieutenants. The Tsarevich Constantine was popular among the troops, but he was a true son of Paul I. Subject to gusts of ungovernable fury and to the wildest caprices, he was the terror of his officers and the civil population. Novossiltzov charged Czartoryski with promoting an anti-Russian agitation in the schools; and Czartoryski complained that the Viceroy, General Zaïonchek,

was a mere soldier, unfit to govern constitutionally. Poland, in short, was fast becoming a larger and more dangerous Ireland. The second Diet was convoked in 1820. A series of abundant harvests had raised the standard of prosperity to an unexampled height; and the population had increased by nearly twenty-five per cent. since the Peace. But the note of discontent grew louder. The press was violently anti-Russian; and a self-styled "Patriotic Society" was in existence, which aimed at severing the connection with the Empire. In his opening address Alexander reaffirmed his wish to uphold the Constitution, but he warned the Poles that, on their side, they must display loyalty to the Crown and a sincere wish to second its efforts on their behalf. This gentle reproof excited a storm of fury in the Diet. It rejected a bill for recasting the criminal code, and refused to vote the taxes necessary to carry on the administration. Alexander took up the gauntlet. He told the deputies that their hostility compelled him to modify the constitution. By a supplementary clause he excluded the public from the sittings of the Diet, and forbade the divulgence of its debates. At the same time the uncontrolled license of the press was restrained by a censorship. The Poles' rejoinder was an extension of the Patriotic Society, which secured many recruits among the youths attending the German universities.

In October 1820 Alexander quitted Warsaw in deep dejection to attend a third Congress which assembled at Troppau. Its object was to discuss the political situation in the Latin countries, which were seething with revolt against constituted authority. In the previous January a military revolt had taken place near Cadiz under Colonels Quiroga and Riego, which, spreading to Madrid, forced the cowardly and temporising King, Ferdinand VII, to proclaim a free Constitution (March). In February the Duke of Berri, heir to the French throne, had been assassinated. The ferment spread to Italy. At the instigation of the Carbonari the Neapolitan troops rose in



revolt under General Pepé (July); and the bigoted Ferdinand I, who misruled the Two Sicilies, was compelled to follow his relative's example. In August Portugal followed the lead of Spain; and the revolutionists deposed the Regency, which was governing in the place of the King, then in Brazil. Metternich had good reason to dread that the revolutionary spirit would infect the Italian possessions of the House of Austria. Early next year it actually invaded Piedmont. Metternich played on Alexander's fears by suggesting that hidden bonds united the Jacobins of every land. He was able to point his moral by announcing the outbreak of a mutiny in the Semenovski regiment of Guards at St Petersburg. Alexander was convinced that Russia herself was tainted with the universal spirit of revolt. He sounded the Courts of England and France in view of concerted action. England, however, refused to intervene as a precautionary measure against possible dangers, and sent no representative to the Troppau Congress. Louis XVIII held aloof on the pretext of internal disorders. The other Powers reaffirmed the principles of common intervention proclaimed at Aix-la-Chapelle. The protocol subscribed by them was significantly worded—"When political changes, brought about by illegal means, produce dangers to other countries by reason of proximity, and when the Allied Powers can act effectively as regards those conditions, they shall, in order to bring back those countries to their allegiance, employ, firstly amicable means and then coercion." Troppau was the turning-point in Alexander's policy. Convinced of the ingratitude of Russia, Poland, and Germany, he abandoned the path of liberal reform, and threw himself into the arms of Metternich. Thus the Holy Alliance, as manipulated by the Austrian Chancellor, became a chain uniting the military monarchies of Europe against the yearnings of the modern spirit, and a powerful engine of reaction.

In January 1821 the Congress was transferred from Troppau to Laybach, to facilitate the attendance of Ferdinand, King of

the Two Sicilies. Alexander's enthusiasm for his new belief prompted him to offer the aid of a Russian army to root out the revolution at Naples. This proposal was not to the taste of Metternich, who, next to liberalism, hated and feared Russia. At his suggestion the task of restoring order in Southern Italy was delegated to an Austrian army, which made short work of General Pepé and his constitution (March, 1821).

While detained at Laybach by one of his frequent attacks of erysipelas, Alexander heard the first mutterings of the Greek War of Independence. Its originator was Alexander Ypsilanti, a member of an illustrious Fanariot family of Constantinople, who had served in the Russian army, and had lost an arm at Bautzen. At the invitation of the Greek patriots he crossed the Pruth on March 6, 1821, with a few thousands of followers, and called on the Christians of Moldo-Wallachia to cast off the Ottoman yoke. His manifesto alluded mysteriously to a great Power on which he relied for material support; and he tactlessly informed Alexander that the movement was the work of a conspiracy extending over every country inhabited by the Hellenic race. The news came as a thunderbolt on the enfeebled Tsar. Ypsilanti was the bosom-friend of his Minister of Foreign Affairs, Capodistrias, who naturally sympathised with his countrymen's cause. Alexander knew that the Sultan, as well as his own allies, would suspect him of fomenting the insurrection. He took counsel of Metternich, who assured him that Ypsilanti's rash attempt was but a link in the chain of revolts which extended over Europe. He therefore hastened to disown all complicity with Ypsilanti, struck his name from the strength of the Russian army, and ordered his ambassador at Constantinople to offer the Sultan help in crushing the rebellion. A manifesto signed by Russia, Austria, and Prussia was launched at Laybach on May 12, blaming the machinations which made Spain, Italy, and the East of Europe the theatre of civil war, and enjoined their subjects to "quit soil sullied by revolt." The triumph of the Austrian Chancellor

was complete. He boasted at Laybach that, in accordance with the laws of physics, the stronger had attracted the weaker.

When Alexander returned to St Petersburg and escaped the sinister influences which enveloped him at Laybach, he reflected with remorse that he had sacrificed a cause dear to every Russian heart. Ypsilanti's band was soon overwhelmed by Turkish hordes, and he escaped to Transylvania, only to find an Austrian prison awaiting him. The Tsar procured his release, and even asked him to submit the just claims of the Greek Christians to Baron Strogonov, his ambassador at Constantinople. But the movement began by Ypsilanti was not arrested by his discomfiture. A rising began in the Morea; and the flame of revolt spread in succession through the Peloponnesus, the islands, the northern provinces. The Porte retaliated with its wonted ferocity. Massacres of the Fanariots and the leading Greek families of the capital took place. The churches were profaned; and the Patriarch, Gregory, was hanged at the door of his cathedral. A roar of indignation rose throughout Russia, and the Tsar's hand was forced. He demanded explanations from the Sultan, who replied that the insurrection had found a champion in the Russian ambassador. In putting Gregory to death he had done no more than Peter the Great, who had executed the Russian Patriarch in 1715. At the same time he laid an embargo on Russian vessels passing the Bosphorus. Alexander's rejoinder was an ultimatum. Russia demanded no cession of territory, but took her stand on the right of protecting the Christian subjects of the Sultan secured by the Peace of Jassy (1792) and the Treaty of Bucharest. She demanded redress for the murder of the Patriarch, the restoration of the churches pillaged and destroyed, and protection for the Greeks from the barbarities of the Janissaries. If these terms were not promptly complied with, Turkey would place herself in open conflict with Christendom. No reply was vouchsafed within the eight days prescribed for acquiescence;

and on July 27, 1821, Strogonov and his whole suite quitted Constantinople.

War should have followed, but Russia was hardly in a condition to undertake one single-handed. She had not recovered from the desperate struggle with Napoleon; and peace was necessary for the success of the innumerable reforms in progress. The strength of Turkey was as yet unimpaired by the massacre of the Janissaries, while her fleet was vastly superior to that of Russia. Alexander, therefore, sought the cooperation of the Powers bound to him by treaty. Metternich insisted that the Sultan represented the legitimist principle, and that his authority over recalcitrant subjects must be maintained at any cost. He enlarged on the identity of Russian interests with those of Europe, and assured Alexander that Austria would work for him in the east and west alike. This pretended devotion to the Quadruple Alliance was in accord with Austria's traditional policy, which inspired her to undermine Russian influence in the Levant. From Great Britain no help was to be expected. Alexander remembered Pitt's assertion, in his remonstrance against the annexation of Georgia, that "the English people would not permit the destruction of the Turkish power." Castlereagh, who still controlled the Foreign Office, supported Metternich's action. He dissuaded the Tsar from intervention in Greek affairs; and his government, after recording its conviction that the dispute did not justify a war with Turkey, definitely refused to join in any measures for relieving Christians from her control. Alexander felt that, if he attacked the Sultan, he would be opposed by Europe, which might unite to wrest Turkey from his grasp after a campaign which would exhaust his resources. He was led to adopt a less peremptory tone, and intimated that he would reestablish diplomatic relations with the Porte if it recognised the Russian flag in the Bosphorus, evacuated Moldo-Wallachia, and evinced a sincere resolve to protect the exercise of the Greek religion. The British ambassador, Lord

Strangford, was charged with the task of obtaining the Sultan's consent to these terms.

But at the very moment when the Turks seemed about to yield, the Greek insurgents met in congress at Epidaurus and proclaimed their independence; and a crowd of English enthusiasts poured into the peninsula to support the national cause. The sympathy felt by all Russians for their brethren moved the Tsar to take firmer ground. He declared brusquely that the points in discussion were mere preliminaries, and that he intended to deal with the future condition of Greek Christians. This announcement stirred the Turks to fury. On February 25, 1822, the Ministers, the Janissaries, and the trade guilds of Constantinople met in conclave, and a declaration of war was averted only by the tact of Lord Strangford. The fruit of many months' negotiations was lost.

Metternich determined to appeal to the Treaties of 1815 for a solution of the deadlock; and at his suggestion a Congress of Sovereigns was summoned. It met at Vienna, but on August 25 it was transferred to Verona, in order to accommodate the Italian princes. Great Britain was to have been represented by Lord Castlereagh, who had succeeded to his father's marquisate of Londonderry; but on the eve of starting for Verona he put an end to his life. His successor in the Foreign Office was George Canning, whose advent to power produced a radical change in British policy. The traditional conservatism which inclined to an alliance with the military Powers, was replaced by one in closer touch with the modern spirit. Canning recognised the impossibility of cooperating with absolute monarchies. He regarded the Holy Alliance with intense suspicion, and aimed at promoting constitutional reforms in continental states, with a view of building up alliances worthy of Great Britain. The Duke of Wellington, who represented her at Verona, had instructions to avoid entangling conventions and to work for the maintenance of the existing order of things in Turkey.

The attention of the Congress was distracted for a moment from the East by the rapid progress made by the Spanish revolution. Alexander's first impulse was to suppress it with a Russian army; but the French government were resolved to keep the matter in their own hands, and France ultimately became the mandatory of Europe in Spain. Her people and troops were weary of the Bourbons; and Louis XVIII obtained his wish to stifle disaffection in shouts of victory. A French army invested Cadiz, and after defeating the national forces at the Trocadero (Aug. 21, 1823), restored Ferdinand to absolute power, and enabled him to wreak a sanguinary vengeance on the Liberals.

It is but just to Alexander to add that this decision of the Congress was arrived at in spite of his protests. He was opposed to the license given to France to embark on one of those wars of aggression which had made her a curse to Europe. But he was no longer the man who had inspired new zeal in wavering allies, displaying firmness in disaster and steady confidence in the future. Though still in the prime of life, he was bowed down by labour and sorrow. Deafness, too, afflicted him, bringing suspicion and deep melancholy. His first words at Verona showed a determination to crush the revolutionary spirit and restore legitimate rule; but he declared that his allies' friendship inspired him with so implicit a confidence that he would abandon the control of negotiations to them. When the delegates of the Greek government sought an audience of the Congress, it was refused; and they were threatened with imprisonment if they crossed the Austrian frontier. Alexander told the French plenipotentiary, Châteaubriand, that a religious war with Turkey would have been most popular in Russia; that every effort had been made to induce him to break with his allies. Providence, however, had not placed him at the head of 800,000 men for the gratification of personal ambitions, but for the good of mankind. He had seen the revolutionary mark in the troubles of Greece, and held his hand, though personal

sympathy and the traditions of Russia urged him to intervene. In August, 1822, he had dismissed his Grecophil minister, Capodistrias, and made Count Nesselrode his minister of Foreign Affairs. The evolution of the despot from the man of liberal impulses was complete.

In October 1823 Alexander met the Emperor Francis at Czernovitz in Galicia, and at his urgent entreaty consented to renew diplomatic relations with the Porte. But Russian opinion was daily growing more bellicose, and it was kept at boiling-point by the savagery displayed in the struggle with Greek nationalists. The Turkish programme was nothing less than the extermination of the people of the peninsula and their replacement by Musulman colonists from Egypt. The Sultan, however, reckoned without the large resources in men, ships, and money placed at the insurgents' disposal by sympathisers in England and France. During the course of 1824 a series of sea-fights took place in Eastern waters with varying fortunes; and the Hellenic cause grew brighter. The insurgents were encouraged by hopes of active intervention. The first direct proposals for such action were made by Alexander in Jan. 1824, but the plan which he put forward—that Greece should be divided into three autonomous provinces under the Sultan's suzerainty—met with acceptance nowhere. The Conference held at St Petersburg for upwards of a year (1824-5) produced no agreement on the Greek question.

In 1825 Alexander recalled his *chargé d'affaires* from Constantinople and urged the British Government to join him in a note to the Porte. On meeting with a curt refusal he turned to Austria; but Metternich invoked the aid of time against the Turkish oppressors. At length the Tsar lost patience, and resolved to act alone. He informed the Austrian Court that thenceforward Russia would follow her own line of action and be guided exclusively by national interests. War with Turkey was resolved upon. In October 1825, when Alexander's days were numbered, he despatched an ultimatum to the Porte which

set forth his minimum demands for securing liberty of religion to Turkish Christians and independence to Greece. At the same time he massed 100,000 troops on the Pruth, raised his fleet to the strength of 70 ships of the line and 18 frigates, and made active preparations for a campaign which his death in December 1825 prevented him from carrying out. Metternich's policy, aided by the Tsar's vacillation, and the mutual jealousies of the Powers, postponed the inevitable war with Turkey, but left the Eastern Question unsolved.

Alexander's return from Verona in 1822 marked the commencement of the domestic reaction, known as the Arakchievchina. Its instigator became all-powerful, intercepted complaints of malversation, and contrived effective measures for repressing liberal instincts in Russia. Behind him stood two intriguing churchmen—Seraphim, Metropolitan of Moscow, and the Archimandrite Photii. Under their influence the Tsar's zeal for the Bible Society and Protestantism grew cold. The press, which had admittedly abused the license accorded to it, was subjected to a vigorous censure. In 1824 came the dismissal of the broad-minded Prince Galitsin, Minister of Public Instruction. His successor was Admiral Shishkov, who denied the necessity of educating the lower classes, and thought the lights of science harmful to people who were born to obey. His colleague Magnitzki, Chancellor of the Kazan University, reorganised the curriculum in accordance with the principles of the Holy Alliance, and proscribed the Copernican System as opposed to the Scriptures. Professors suspected of irreligion or leanings towards Jacobinism were dismissed by scores; and Russians educated at foreign universities were excluded from the teaching staff. Polish disaffection increased in 1823, when Czartoryski, despairing of the future, abandoned the service of Government. Riots broke out among the students at Vilna, and an ordinance was issued forbidding Poles to attend German universities, which were regarded as hotbeds of revolution. At



the suggestion of the Archimandrite Photii, a ukase was launched in August 1824, directing all Jews, other than established merchants or physicians, to colonise the Ukraine as agriculturists. The alternative left them was banishment from the Empire.

In the despair generated by shattered health and dead illusions, it was but natural that Alexander's thoughts should revert to one of his youthful dreams—that of spending his last years in retirement. The heir to the Crown was the Tsarevich Constantine, Commander-in-chief at Warsaw, who was unfitted by temperament and education to follow constitutional paths. Constantine, too, was aware of his incapacity to govern Russia, and so early as the spring of 1819 he placed a written resignation of his claims to the succession in Alexander's hands. The next heir was the Grand Duke Nicholas Pavlovich, who was eighteen years younger than the Tsar. His early days had been spent in isolation, which rendered him reserved and inexperienced in men and affairs: but he was better suited to govern a modern empire than the capricious Constantine. Punctual in the discharge of his functions as Brigadier-General, he was dreaded by his subordinates as a severe but just disciplinarian. In 1817 he married the Princess Charlotte of Prussia, who was received into the Greek Church as Alexandra Feodorovna. The young couple lived in domestic retirement at the Anichkov Palace, and in 1818 a son was born to them, who became Alexander II. Thus Nicholas's age and disposition afforded some presumption that he would reign long and vigorously; while the succession was assured in his branch. His elder brother, on the other hand, lived apart from his wife, a Princess of Saxe-Coburg, and had no issue. On April 2, 1820, Constantine induced the Tsar to issue a decree through the Holy Synod divorcing him from his Grand Duchess; and a ukase was published simultaneously, confirming one issued by Paul I in April 1797, which regulated the succession to the throne. Until that date the Tsar possessed the faculty of nominating his

successor from the members of his family. Paul established the principle of primogeniture, and declared that the Crown should devolve on a female only in the absence of male heirs. Alexander I introduced further limitations. His ukase, which is still in force, precludes any member of the House of Romanov who may espouse a person of non-royal birth from transmitting his right of succession to his children. The object of this measure was explained on May 12 by Constantine's marriage with Countess Jeanne Grudzińska, the daughter of a simple Polish gentleman. Her beauty and accomplishments softened the extravagances of his character; and their union was so ideally happy that Alexander treated her as a sister-in-law and created her Princess of Lovicz.

In the meantime the young Grand Duke Nicholas had been in some measure prepared for the high destinies which associated him. In 1819 Alexander reviewed the regiment of Guards under his brother's command, and dined privately with the youthful couple. After praising the Grand Duke's diligence, he told him abruptly that he looked upon him as a successor. He felt that the Empire required a younger and more progressive ruler than himself or Constantine. The Tsar of Russia must enjoy exceptional bodily and mental strength; his own powers were failing; and he had resolved to abdicate before irreparable harm were done. Constantine had renounced the succession, which would thus devolve on Nicholas and his children. The Grand Duke heard his brother's words with amazement. His peaceful family life and his daily round of congenial duties were doomed. He saw himself thrust into a position of appalling responsibility, for which he was unfitted by tastes and education, and which had no attractions whatever in his eyes. In his own words, he had in Alexander "the living example of a sovereign whose whole existence was an incessant sacrifice to duty, but who had rarely received common gratitude—at least from contemporaries." He burst into tears and replied that he had always served the Tsar with devotion, and

was ready to fulfil his commands: but he felt that his character and abilities were unequal to the task of governing Russia. Alexander remarked that he had been equally unprepared on his own accession, and had met with graver difficulties than any which his heir would encounter. Here the momentous discussion ended. Nicholas heard no more of his brother's intentions; nor was any attempt made to instruct him in the routine of government.

In January 1822 Alexander's health and energy were at so low an ebb that he conceived it to be indispensable to place the succession on a securer basis. Under pressure from him, Constantine sent him on February 7 a formal renunciation of the throne, which the Tsar accepted in writing. The letters exchanged were communicated to the two Empresses and the Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna, under the seal of secrecy, which was strictly observed. In the following year Alexander resolved to embody them in an Act of State. A manifesto was drawn up on September 9, 1823, with the knowledge of Arakchiev, Prince Galitsin, and Philaret, Metropolitan of Moscow, which declared Constantine's resolution "fixed and irrevocable," and recognised Nicholas as heir to the Crown in conformity with the Act of Succession of 1797. This document, with the letters which had passed between the brothers, was placed in a sealed cover; and upon it Alexander wrote, "To be kept in the Church of the Ascension at Moscow until I demand it, and in the event of my death to be transmitted to the Eparchial Bishop and the Governor-General of Moscow, and to be opened by them." The documents on which such mighty issues hung were duly laid up in the Cathedral of Moscow; and copies were added to the archives of the Ruling Senate, the Holy Synod, and the Council of State. An autograph superscription on the letter decreed that, on the demise of the Crown, it should be opened at a meeting specially convened for the purpose. It is impossible to fathom all the motives which induced Alexander to keep the prince most deeply con-

cerned in ignorance of this resolution, and to render it revocable by himself. He was probably not convinced of the durability of Constantine's matrimonial happiness. The Tsarevich had been led to resign his claims by a lurid picture of the dangers besetting the Russian throne painted by its actual occupant. He told the Queen of Saxony that "his neck was not strong enough to reign"; but he still clung to the title usually but not necessarily borne by the heir-apparent. If he were to divorce the Princess of Lovicz, no power on earth could prevent him from claiming his birthright. Moreover, all his tastes and instincts appealed to the Old Russian party. In spite of his fits of passion he was adored by the troops. Nicholas, on the other hand, was an unknown quantity. His reserve raised a barrier between himself and others, and he was never popular. There is an alloy of duplicity in these transactions which was probably due to the lessons of Alexander's early life. But he did rightly in following his maxim to think ten times ere he acted once; albeit that his reticence well-nigh proved the ruin of the House of Romanov.

He was unaware of an occult movement which was sapping the loyalty of his troops and the enlightened portion of the civil population. Russia was no longer the empire of Catherine II, whose courtiers discussed great principles in an academic spirit by the cold light of Voltairean philosophy. Intercourse with the West had brought a new force into play, that of public opinion; and it displayed a bitter hostility towards reaction in any shape. European culture was no longer a veneer. It permeated the superior classes, and gave them broader conceptions of human rights. Young Russians began to study the works on constitutional reform which poured forth from the presses of England and France. We have seen that the Army of Occupation returned home brimming over with revolutionary ideas. It was among the troops that the new doctrines took root.

The first attempt to prepare the way for an enlightened form of government was made in February 1817, when a secret society

was founded at St Petersburg styled the "Union of Salvation, the free and faithful Children of the Fatherland." Its aim was to repress abuses by disclosing every wrongful act perpetrated by men in power; and its rules laid stress upon the necessity of securing useful proselytes. Shortly afterwards another of these associations took root, the "Union of the Public Good." German influence was patent in its statutes, with an entire ignorance of practical life. The members severally pledged themselves to promote liberal education, philanthropy, justice, and a regard for political economy. In 1821 the revolutionary currents at work throughout Europe brought more formidable forces into play. The moderate section among affiliated members took alarm at the views of the radical majority. They seceded, and the league was dissolved. About this time the apparent success attending the mutinies in Italy and Spain produced a reflex action in the two southern armies, 120,000 strong, which garrisoned the Ukraine and the fortresses on the Turkish frontier. The revolutionary movement then generated found a leader in Paul Pestel, son of a disgraced governor-general of Western Siberia, who commanded the Viatka regiment. He was a man of vast energy, but utterly devoid of scruple, and haunted by ambition which made him forget obligations imposed by the Tsar's personal favour. Glinka, his right-hand man, displayed equal ingratitude towards Alexander, in his craving to leave a name in history. The inner circle was completed by Sergius Muraviev-Apostol, Colonel of the Chernigov Regiment, and Bestujev-Riumin, men as desperate and unscrupulous as Pestel himself. From their plottings sprung the "Union of Salvation," more widely known as the "Society of the South," which secured affiliated members in nearly every corps. Their aim soon took shape. It was nothing less than the murder of the whole imperial family and the proclamation of a republic.

The northern conspiracy meanwhile underwent a similar evolution. From the ashes of the Union of the Public Good

arose a more sinister league, the "Society of St Petersburg," or of "the North." Its ostensible chief was Prince Sergius Trubetzkoi, descended from a Lithuanian Prince who had played a great part in liberating Russia from the Polish yoke. Gentle, highly cultured, hating bloodshed, and believing constitutional monarchy to be a panacea for his country's ills, Trubetzkoi might, in happier times, have been a real force in Russian politics. He was unfitted to control the desperate men who surrounded him; and the virtual leader of the malcontents was one who used the prince's great position as a means of enhancing his own importance and propagating his designs. Another leader, Conrad Ryleiev, belonged to the inferior nobility, had served in the army, and in 1821 was secretary of a Russo-American trading company. His dream was, like Trubetzkoi's, a constitution on the British, or perhaps the American model, and he urged it with all the ardour of a poetic nature; but his sanguine temperament led him in time to join the extreme section. Patriotism, too, inspired the brothers Bestujev, Councillor Turgueniev, and General M. Orlov—men of lofty aspirations, and averse to the principles then known as Jacobinism. But plots are, of their very nature, apt to attract the residuum of an artificial civilisation—beings who have nothing to lose and whose desire is rather to gratify an instinct for revenge than to work unselfishly for the public good. The Northern Society included Prince Eugene Obolensky of the Guards, a headstrong youth, who hated the Grand Duke Nicholas and the French with equal vigour. Another member, Yakubovich, had been expelled from the Guards for misconduct, and longed to wreak vengeance for his ruin on the Tsar. Peter Kakhovski, a ready instrument of crime, contemning half-measures as "mere philanthropy," was still more eager for action. Thus the Russian conspiracy of 1817-25 comprised radically diverse elements, which were linked by discontent and a sense of common danger. Some of the plotters aimed at giving their country

more liberal institutions, freeing the serfs, and purifying the administration from corroding abuses. Others, again, were soured by dismissal from offices, baulked ambition, and fancied slights. All of them embarked on the movement with the lightheartedness which Russians are prone to display when attracted by desperate schemes, and clung to it with the stern courage which rarely deserts them in failure.

The vague enthusiasm of the northern conspirators was made to serve the ambition of Pestel and his friends. In 1822 delegates of both societies met at St Petersburg, and after long debates they decided to compass the death of the whole imperial family. "We must purify our house!" cried Pestel; and one of the plotters offered to assassinate the Tsar with his own hand. Then the northern and southern groups joined forces with the Patriotic Society of Warsaw. Pestel asked the Polish leaders whether they were prepared to deal with the Grand Duke Constantine as the Russians intended to treat his brother. He met with an indignant refusal: for no Pole had ever imbrued his hands with the blood of his sovereign. Saner counsels at length prevailed in the north; and the more moderate section, headed by Alexander Muraviev, united in deprecating assassination. Baffled in this design, Pestel resolved to undermine the popularity which Alexander still enjoyed. At his bidding, reports were circulated traducing the Tsar's character and policy. He was represented as desirous of aggrandising Poland at Russia's expense: the tyranny of Arakchiev was ascribed to his master, whose refusal to come to the assistance of the Christians of Turkey was set down to cowardice. These slanders were believed; and the filial love felt by Russians for their "Little Father" gave place to distrust. Thus the societies gained a wider circle of adherents; and with it grew the daring of their enterprise. At meetings held at Kiev in 1823 Pestel brought forward a scheme for a constitution on a republican basis; and it was resolved to murder Alexander during an inspection of the Ukraine

garrisons, which was to have taken place in the following spring. He was saved only by an attack of erysipelas which detained him at Zarskoi-Selo. It was amazing that a plot differing so widely from the palace revolutions of the eighteenth century should have escaped detection for years. The fact is due to Alexander's apathy, bred of the profound discouragement under which he laboured. He was aware, too, that every young officer had a constitution, cut and dried, in his pocket; and he was inclined to underrate the dangers which beset him. The only measures taken to combat them were the prohibition of Freemasonry in 1822, and the exaction of a pledge from all government officials that they would sever their connection with secret societies. In June 1825, while engaged in opening the third Polish Diet at Warsaw, Alexander received from a young English cavalry officer named Sherwood a full disclosure of the treason brewing in his southern army. Even then his fatalism prevailed; and he returned to St Petersburg without taking any steps to meet the crisis.

But the unhappy Tsar showed by his demeanour that the blow was mortal. He retired to a life of complete seclusion at Zarskoi-Selo; and his court was utterly deserted. Such was his dread of sunlight that his study was darkened by a mass of creepers trained across the windows. The Ministers came to him weekly by turns to transact indispensable business. He took his repasts—consisting of fruit—alone; and, when he retired to his comfortless bedroom at 10 P.M., a band played sad music to induce the sleep which was slow in coming. Misfortunes fell thicker on the imperial recluse. A natural daughter whom he fondly loved died in the dawn of womanhood. The news was brought to the stricken father at a review. He turned pale and muttered, "This is indeed a punishment for my sins!" In November 1824 the Neva rose ten feet above the level of the streets of St Petersburg, drowning hundreds of poor creatures and destroying property to the value of £5,000,000. The Tsar's benevolent heart



moved him to take an active share in the work of rescuing sufferers and soothing those who had lost their all. But the lower classes ascribed the calamity to Heaven's anger at the desertion of the Christians' cause in Turkey; while to Alexander's morbid mind it seemed to be a judgment on his own unfilial conduct.

As a collision with the Ottoman Porte was expected in the following spring, he decided to visit the army massed on the southern frontier during the autumn of 1825. The Empress Elizabeth's health was manifestly failing; and the physicians advised her to seek a more genial climate in Italy. But so consuming was her anxiety on Alexander's account that she insisted on preceding him to Taganrog. It is difficult to understand why that town was selected as the Tsar's headquarters during the southern tour; for it looks on the marshy Sea of Azov and the desolate steppes, and has no attraction whatever. On September 13 Alexander set out on his last journey southwards. He ordered a Service for the Dead to be celebrated at the Monastery of Saint Alexander Nevsky, and drove alone to the shrine long before dawn. The monks were assembled there to implore a blessing on the departing Tsar; and, at the suggestion of the Metropolitan Seraphim, he entered a cell where a renowned hermit lay in his coffin. He listened intently to the holy man's diatribes on the corruption of the age, and murmured, "I regret that I did not know you earlier." Stopping his carriage on a hill whence the domes and spires of St Petersburg were visible, he said, "This is, indeed, beautiful!" Taganrog was reached on September 25. The Empress's health seemed to revive in the peaceful surroundings; and her husband found some solace in superintending the progress of improvements and in daily acts of charity. On November 1 he set out on a tour in the Crimea, attended by General Diébitch and Count Voronzov, with a view to confirm the loyalty of his Tatar subjects. While deep in plans for their welfare he received from a captain named Maiboroda

full details of the southern conspiracy. Warrants were issued for the arrest of Pestel and his fellow-plotters; and other measures were taken to meet the appalling crisis. But the shock was too severe for Alexander's enfeebled frame. He fell a victim to the malarial fever which prevails at that season in the Crimea. In spite of growing weakness he insisted on inspecting the garrisons and public buildings at Sebastopol, Eupatoria, and Mariopol, and returned to Taganrog in a high fever on November 17. Two days later particulars of a plot at Moscow reached him. He learnt that plans had been matured for seizing the persons of the imperial family on March 24, when they were to assemble at a mass for the repose of his father's soul in the chapel of the citadel of St Petersburg. He was pierced to the heart by the ingratitude of the conspirators, many of whom owed everything to him; but said that their designs were a just retribution for his own early sins. He spurned the advice and medicines proffered by Sir James Wylie, and insisted on dictating lengthy despatches dealing with the movement. At length delirium supervened: and the dying man's words showed that the scenes of his glorious youth were fresh in his memory. He raved of Austerlitz, Friedland, Moscow. At the faithful Wylie's entreaty, a priest was sent for on November 27; and the patient received the last rites of the Church. The confessor urged him to submit to medical treatment, for otherwise his death would be virtually a suicide. Alexander seemed struck with this monition and allowed the usual remedies to be applied. They came too late. The fever and delirium increased. On the morning of December 1, 1825, he pressed the hand of his devoted wife, who was destined in three weeks to follow him to the grave. In vain he tried to speak: and at twenty minutes to eleven the great spirit passed away.

Of Alexander I it may be truly said that no monarch ever wielded unlimited power with a loftier resolve to promote the

happiness of his people. And not theirs alone; for he sympathised with all the myriads doomed to suffering by false ideals and effete institutions. In him men saw the long-expected Messiah who was to give peace to a distracted world. But his nature had an alloy of feminine weakness, unfitting him to bear the reformer's cross. He was too sensitive of impressions derived from without; too easily led by counsellors who gained his confidence but were not always worthy of it. In youth he was swayed by noble infatuations and enamoured of the most diverse ideas in turn. But when he stood confronted with a crisis in his country's fortunes he rose superior to vacillation and kept a great design steadily in view. The will-power thus developed, and the resources at his command, made him for a brief period the leading figure in the civilised world. Despondency came with the inevitable reaction which followed the effort. He was drawn into the mazes of German illuminism, which lessened his capacity for persistent resolve. Its effect was heightened by his failure to pierce the dense phalanxes of ignorance around him, and by the unvarying ingratitude which requited his efforts for the public weal. Increasing physical weakness hastened the death of his generous illusions. An excessive devotion to duty exhausted his flagging powers; and he became unequal to the task of governing All the Russias. As a dying tree is strangled by parasitical growths, so was Alexander in his decadence attacked by the enemies of human progress. When Metternich and Arakchiev gained the mastery, all hope of domestic reform and consistent foreign policy disappeared. But, despite the shadows which darkened his declining years, Alexander I of Russia will stand out in history as one of the few men born in the purple who rightly appraised the accident of birth and the externals of imperial rank; who held opinions far in advance of his age, and never wittingly abused his limitless powers; who displayed equal firmness in danger and magnanimity in the hour of triumph.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE FIRST REACTION.

NICHOLAS I. 1825-1855.

TIDINGS of Alexander's death reached the Grand Duke Nicholas on Dec. 9, 1825, while he was attending a High Mass for his recovery at the Winter Palace. After condoling with his stricken mother, he paraded the Preobrajensk Regiment, which was on guard, and ordered them to acknowledge Constantine as their Tsar. He then pronounced the oath of allegiance to his brother in the Palace Chapel. But the Imperial Council assembled according to custom; and the President took cognisance of the packet deposited in its archives by the late Tsar. The manifesto and letters exchanged between the Sovereign and the Heir-Apparent were read amid the breathless silence of the Councillors. No doubt was left in their minds as to the lawful devolution of the Crown. They waited in a body on Nicholas, proclaimed him Tsar of All the Russias, and prepared to take an oath of fealty to him. After reading the state papers which they laid before him, he rejected the proffered purple. "I am not Tsar," he said, "and have no wish to become one at my brother's expense. I will accept the throne only if he persists in surrendering his rights." In vain did the Empress-Mother implore him to reconsider his decision. He was deaf to remonstrance, and insisted on the Council's swearing allegiance to Constantine. Their example was followed by the Senate and the Holy

Synod. Such self-abnegation was unknown in history; and very few of Nicholas's contemporaries were capable of appreciating its grandeur. The motives underlying it were frankly stated in a manifesto published on his accession. Constantine's renunciation had not been clothed with the law's sanction; and his brother's unwillingness to supplant him was due to respect for the fundamental institutions of the Empire. With sore misgivings the Senate issued a ukase imposing the oath to Constantine on all subordinate authorities. A formal notification was sent him; a Council of Regency was appointed to govern during his absence from the capital; and all needful steps were taken to legalise his succession. While these events were in progress at St Petersburg, Warsaw was the scene of occurrences equally strange. Constantine received intelligence of his brother's death 36 hours before it reached the northern capital, and he did not hesitate as to his course of action. His younger brother, the Grand Duke Michael, who happened to be his guest, was sent to St Petersburg, bearing two dispatches under the Tsarevich's hand. The first was a letter addressed to the Empress-Mother, in which he announced that he considered it obligatory to cede his rights in conformity with the Imperial Act regulating the succession. The second conveyed to Nicholas himself the writer's resolution to surrender his birth-right. He begged his Imperial Majesty to receive the oath of obedience and fealty from him first among his subjects, and asked only that he might retain the honorary title of Tsarevich, conferred on him by their father for military services.

On Dec. 15, 1825, Michael reached St Petersburg, where his messages caused the deepest perplexity. Uncertain as to the legal effect of the oath of allegiance already taken, Nicholas begged him to return to Warsaw, and explain to their brother what had occurred. Michael set out at once, but he met at Dorpat a confidential servant charged with Constantine's reply to the announcement. After opening the cover he allowed

the courier to proceed with it on his journey. When Nicholas received this fresh evidence of his brother's renunciation all doubts vanished. After an interregnum of three weeks he assumed the sceptre on Dec. 24, and notified the fact to the Imperial Council and Senate. An accession-manifesto, drawn up with rare skill by Speranski and Karamsin, imposed the oath of fealty to Nicholas I and the Heir-Apparent on all public functionaries. Under these state papers December 1 was fixed as the date of the new reign's commencement. The day was spent in anxious discussion, for news came of the awful disclosures regarding the southern plot which had been Alexander's death-blow. Then arrived disquieting despatches from Kiev, whither General Diébitch had been sent to arrest Pestel and his brother-conspirators. On the morrow the Imperial Council assembled. Its members severally took the new oath of allegiance, as did the Senate and the Holy Synod.

The session lasted till 2 A.M. on Dec. 26, when Nicholas made his appearance and read the manifesto aloud. His delay in attending the Council was due to the receipt of news still more alarming. Colonel Rostovtsev revealed to the Tsar a plot which was on the eve of maturing at St Petersburg itself, and added that the regiments of the Imperial Guard were deeply implicated. No one versed in the history of palace revolutions could doubt the extreme gravity of the crisis. The Tsar saw himself deserted by the only force which stood between order and anarchy. He maintained an impassive mien, however, and directed that the oath of fealty to him should be tendered to the Guard regiments in their barracks on Dec. 27. Then he snatched a few hours of sleep, haunted by wild dreams; but it was characteristic of the man that his wife was not informed of the terrible situation. St Petersburg meanwhile gave no sign of the volcano at work within its bosom. The newspapers were full of praises of the dead sovereign and made no allusion to the thorny question of succession. But men's minds were agitated by the wildest rumours; and doubts dislodged the

inborn loyalty to the Tsar which had been the chief bulwark of the Empire.

Full advantage was taken of the interregnum by the northern conspirators. They met at Ryleiev's house on Dec. 24, and agreed to represent to the troops that the oath about to be imposed on them was an infraction of that rendered to Constantine. These ignorant men were to be told by their superior officers who were in the plot that the Tsarevich's renunciation was an imposture, and that he and the Grand Duke Michael were held in irons. The Guards gained over to the cause were to be mustered in a central place, and to act, under Prince Trubetzkoï's orders, as circumstances might dictate. It was hoped that Nicholas, deserted by his only defenders, would abdicate. In that event the Senate would be convened, and forced to issue a manifesto convoking deputies from every province to vote a constitutional régime and name a sovereign. In the interval a provisional government was to be selected from the leaders of the plot, which would take steps to secure the support of the Polish conspirators, and concert measures for preserving the unity of the Empire. At this meeting Ryleiev cast aside the moderation which had hitherto distinguished him. He maintained that, unless Nicholas were destroyed, a civil war was inevitable, and, embracing Kakhovski, he implored him to rid them of the Tsar.

On the following night the plotters again assembled in conclave, and learnt to their dismay that the Imperial Council of State had been convoked to arrange for the enforcing of the new oath of allegiance. They were reassured when Ryleiev read dispatches from the southern societies averring that 100,000 men were eager to join the movement. It was agreed that the affiliated Guards' officers should betake themselves on the morrow to their respective barracks, shake the confidence of the troops, and send those whom they might win over to corrupt their comrades. The whole of the Imperial Guard was to assemble on the Square of the Senate and await the

steps to be taken by the provisional government. It was now that Yakubovich displayed his ferocity and absence of scruple. He urged that the spirit-shops should be pillaged and their contents distributed to the populace. The proletariat of St Petersburg was the most degraded in Europe. Every noble had a swarm of ill-paid retainers; and masterless men, ignorant, brutal, and ready for every crime, abounded. The proposal was combated by Ryleiev, but it was adopted with acclamation; and the plotters separated at dawn well content with their sinister work.

At the same hour the Tsar rose and received the General commanding the Guards. He read the new manifesto and ordered the General to administer the oath to the Staff and to the officers of each regiment. "You will answer with your life," he said, "for the city's peace. If I am to be Tsar for an hour only, I will be so with dignity." Noble words, which showed that the crisis had produced its man. The veteran Miloradovich, Governor of St Petersburg, hurried up to assure the Tsar that all needful precautions had been taken, and that the city was perfectly quiet. Nicholas had good grounds for distrusting this optimism, and waited with impatience for news of the reception by the Guards' officers of the oath of allegiance. At 11 o'clock he learnt that the Horse Artillery, after wavering, had submitted; but that other Guard battalions, including four companies of the Moscow regiments, had hearkened to the falsehoods told them by Shtepin Rostovski and the brothers Bestujev. They had murdered their brigadier-general and colonel, who had endeavoured to recall them to duty, provided themselves with flints and ball-cartridges from the magazines, and traversed the streets with flags flying and shouts of "Hurrah, Constantine! Hurrah, Constituzia!" It is said that they were so ignorant as to think that "Constitution" was the name of Constantine's wife. They had halted on the Senate Square and had been joined by the Marine battalion of the Guards and some Grenadiers.



Thereupon the Tsar despatched his Chief of the Staff to lead the Semenovski Regiment against the mutineers, and ordered the Horse Guards under arms. He embraced the Empress, knelt at her side in the Palace oratory to implore divine protection, and confided the young Heir-Apparent, then in his seventh year, to the custody of the Chasseurs of the Finnish Guards. Then, clad in the uniform of the Ismailovski Regiment, without a cloak, and wearing no badge of rank save a broad blue cordon, he left the palace and entered the Square on its southern front. Strange was the scene which met his unfaltering glance. The open space was full of sledges conveying their masters to the Accession *Te Deum*, and fringed by a mob which stood silent and perplexed. Nicholas advanced to their midst, and while his figure towered above the sea of uncovered heads he read the manifesto in resonant tones. The effect was electric. "We will not surrender our Tsar," the people shouted, "we will tear in pieces those who attack him!" He acknowledged their loyalty and told them to return home quietly. His spirits were now raised by the arrival of the troops who remained staunch. Some squadrons of the Horse Guards roused the echoes of the Square, and formed on the open space now occupied by the Alexander Gardens. The Preobrajensk Regiment, notorious in the annals of palace revolutions, debouched on the vast enclosure, and they were followed by the majority of the Pavlovsk Grenadiers. Next arrived General Miloradovich, whose downcast looks showed that his optimism had been belied by events. Nicholas uttered no word of reproach, but sent the old General in advance to persuade the mutineers to return to allegiance. Then he mounted, and heading two companies of the Preobrajensk Regiment, he rode at a foot's pace towards the Square of the Senate. At that instant a pistol-shot rang out, followed by the rattle of musketry. It announced the death-wound of Miloradovich. Covered with decorations gained in a score of battles, he rode boldly up to the mutineers, and was in the act of

assuring them that Constantine had really resigned his rights when he received a ball through his chest from Kakhovski. His fall was the signal for an irregular volley from the mutineers. The die was cast.

Nicholas now entered the Square. The theatre of revolt was well suited to the great drama of an Empire's agony. On the east and west rose the imposing façades of the Admiralty, the Senate, and the Holy Synod, edifices built for eternity in disregard of the treacherous marsh beneath. In the rear was the unfinished Church of St Isaac, now the most sumptuous fane in Europe. Northward was the ice-bound Neva; and beyond it the tapering gilt spire of the Citadel Church marked the cradle of the metropolis and the burial-place of its founder, Peter the Great. In front of the Senate House, poised upon a mass of Finnish granite, stood an equestrian statue of that mighty ruler, whose shade still seems to hover over the city called into being by his indomitable will. It was now the rallying point of sedition. The centre of the vast space was occupied by mutineers, who formed two irregular squares, about 4,000 strong, the left flank of that nearest the Neva resting on the statue. Brandy had been copiously administered by their leaders; and its results were seen in their disordered uniforms and the shouts "Hurrah, Constantine! Hurrah, Constituzia!" A dense crowd of onlookers filled every avenue, and swarmed on the roof of the Senate House. The Tsar looked around him for support, which was not long in coming. The Horse Guards trotted up, and when asked whom they would obey replied with one voice, "Long live Nicholas!" To his surprise he was joined by six companies of the mutinous Moscow regiment, brought back to allegiance by their colonel, the Grand Duke Michael, who had on that morning returned from his second journey towards Warsaw. Feeling his position more secure, Nicholas took steps to surround the square and cut off the rebels' retreat. The bridge leading to Vassili Ostrov was strongly held, and attacks made on the Citadel, the Senate

House, and the Winter Palace were foiled by the steadfastness of their garrisons. Having made all needful dispositions the Tsar advanced to reconnoitre the mutineers' position. Bullets flew past him, and he retired slowly to the southern side of the Place, which is now covered by the beautiful Alexander Garden. At his bidding the hostile squares were charged by cavalry. But space was insufficient for the squadrons' deploying; the horses were not rough shod, and slipped on the icy pavement. They were received with volleys of musketry, and recoiled in some disorder. The attitude of the mob, which had been well plied with spirits, grew more menacing; and the Horse Guards posted in front of the Senate House were assailed with missiles from its roof. No resource remained but to employ cannon. As the Horse Artillery were not to be trusted, Nicholas sent for their comrades on foot, and took advantage of the inevitable pause to reassure his anxious wife at the Winter Palace. On his way thither he met a detachment of Grenadier Guards hastening to join their comrades in revolt. His salute being met by shouts of "Hurrah Constantine!" he remarked, "You have lost your way; your place is there," pointing to the centre of the square. Another body of troops maintained a sullen silence when similarly greeted. "Eyes right; march!" shouted the Tsar, and he was obeyed.

On returning from his errand of love, he found the artillery ranged on the south side of the square, facing the rebels. The latter still clung to their original position. They were without leaders. Prince Trubetzkoi had lost his head and taken refuge at the French Embassy; and Ryleiev and Bestujev were seeking him with frantic cries through the streets. Russian soldiers are ideally brave, but they lack initiative. Such was the temper of those who grudgingly rendered their allegiance, that a determined charge made on the Tsar's position would probably have succeeded. But as the day wore on, the mutineers grew hungry and faint-hearted. They were content to fire

their muskets at random and shout for Constantine and "Constitutia."

Hesitating to begin his reign with bloodshed, the Tsar sent the Grand Duke Michael to reason with these desperate men. One of the leaders named Küchelbäcker, aimed a pistol at him; but it was struck up by one of the Moscow Guards. As a last resource the forces of religion were brought into play. The Metropolitans of St Petersburg and Kiev, in full pontificals, approached the hostile squares. On either side the mob and the loyal troops fell on their knees; but the mutineers received them with mocking shouts. Their expostulations were drowned in a roll of drums; bullets whistled round them; and they sought shelter in the neighbouring Cathedral. It was now past three o'clock, and the brief winter's day was drawing to a close. To allow darkness to fall without taking drastic steps was to ensure the pillage of St Petersburg and the success of the revolution. Nicholas yielded to the entreaty of those around him and ordered the artillery to fire on their comrades. The first shots were purposely aimed high, and took effect in the mob gathered on the roof of the Senate House. They were received by the mutineers with yells of derision. But two salvoes rang out in quick succession; and, when the grape-shot ploughed through their serried squares, they broke. In a few moments the quays and the frozen river were covered with fugitives. At seven o'clock all was over. After providing for the safety of the capital, and the arrest of the leading conspirators, Nicholas hurried back to the Winter Palace. The Empire had been saved by his steadfast courage.

On that day Paul Pestel and twelve other ringleaders of the southern conspiracy were arrested at Tulchin, the head-quarters of the second army of the south. The same fate befell the brothers Muraviev at Kiev, but they were immediately released by the soldiers of the traitorous Chernigov Regiment, of which Bestujev Riumin was Lieutenant-Colonel. The malcontents of that corps, about 700

in number, were led by the three plotters on Kiev, but they were met halfway by a superior force under General Geismar. After encountering a round of grape-shot and a charge of cavalry, they laid down their arms. One of the Muravievs was killed; his brother, with Bestujev Riumin, both sorely wounded, were captured. All who had instigated the meeting in St Petersburg were already in safe custody. Prince Trubetzkoï was surrendered by his brother-in-law, the French Ambassador; and his life was contemptuously spared. The rest, 155 in number, were given up by relatives; for the ties of kindred were for the nonce forgotten, and all classes vied with each other in bringing the guilty to justice. When the threads of the conspiracy were in the Tsar's hands, he appointed a military commission to search it to its roots and to discriminate between the degree of guilt attaching to the prisoners. The accused underwent repeated examinations; and every effort was made to secure avowals. In most cases this object was gained; and on June 11, 1826, the investigations concluded with a verdict of guilty against all the offenders. The Tsar was clement. He ranged the convicts in two categories, awarded light penalties to thirty-four who had been led away by bad example, and sent the remainder before a High Court selected from the members of the great Departments of Government. The culprits having been already convicted by the Commission, the functions of this body were restricted to examining the record of each case and reporting its decision thereon to the Tsar. All the accused were declared guilty of high treason, death sentences were pronounced; and severity was urged with a degree of subservience which is but too apparent at every stage of the inquiry. But Nicholas again showed a tendency to temper justice with mercy. By a ukase of July 22, 1826, he singled out five leaders whose crimes called for the extreme penalty. These were Paul Pestel, Conrad Ryleiev, S. Bestujev-Riumin, S. Muraviev-Apostol, and Kakhovski. Others who were as

deeply implicated, received a commutation of the death sentence on the score of their repentance; and Küchelbäcker was so dealt with at the intercession of his intended victim, the Grand Duke Michael. The great majority of the criminals were sentenced to banishment to the Ural mines or Siberia, and the loss of civil rights. Those condemned to death were given twenty-four hours to prepare for their fate; and at dawn on July 25 they were hanged on the glacis of the Citadel. They died like men, though their doom was rendered more terrible by the clumsiness of the executioners. Ryleiev was gentle and penitent, admitting that he had been led away by patriotic zeal. Pestel seemed concerned chiefly for the fate of a draft judicial code to which he had devoted much labour. "My only mistake," said he, "was a wish to gather in the harvest before sowing the seed."

The Decabrists, as they are styled by Russian historians, were swayed by widely different motives; for great crises stir the emotions to their depths and elicit all that is best and vilest in human nature. Among them were patriots of a lofty type, who aimed at wiping away the stain of serfdom, giving stability to the laws, and purifying the executive administration. The reforms for which they fell have been carried out by the very authority they defied. But it is impossible to avoid the conviction that, had the December plot succeeded, the will of the base majority would have asserted itself; and Russia would have been the theatre of another Reign of Terror. The abortive revolution—this monstrous alliance between forces of good and evil—not only failed to shake the power against which it was levelled: it served as a lesson to the new Tsar, and heralded a reaction which lasted for a generation.

Nicholas I was in his thirtieth year when the burden of empire was thrust upon him. He was physically well fitted to play the part of autocrat: his lofty stature and penetrating blue eye proclaimed him a born king of men. But his

mental equipment left much to be desired. His early youth had been spent at the gloomy palace of Gatshina, preserved from the corruption of a Court, but also remote from the invigorating influence of emulation. It is the misfortune of most princes that the deference with which they are surrounded from the cradle forbids them to measure their powers with other men. They are apt, therefore, to judge things from artificial standpoints. Breathing an atmosphere of etiquette, they become versed only in its usages, and devote all their energy to trifles. Nicholas' sole companion was his younger brother Michael; and the lads were placed under pedantic instructors who aimed at forming soldiers rather than citizens. Classical studies, which promote sympathy with human life, formed no part of the curriculum. Mathematics, on the other hand, which develop reasoning power at the expense of the emotions, was assiduously studied. In 1812 the young Grand Dukes were brought to St Petersburg, where they enjoyed brighter surroundings and more freedom. Nicholas received the command of a regiment of Sappers of the Guard, and distinguished himself by devotion to duty and the severity with which he exacted its performance by others. He commanded respect by a majestic mien; but his natural reserve, bred of self-distrust and ignorance of the world, was attributed to pride; and he neither sought nor gained popularity.

Such natures are doomed to be misunderstood by the bulk of mankind, who are captivated by the tricks of the charlatan but fail to divine character under the external husk. Nicholas was a thorough man, hating flattery and incapable of falsehood. His greatest treasure, though he knew it not, was a heart whose promptings were not stifled by a faulty education. He visited England in 1814, in the train of the Allied Princes, and found a congenial atmosphere in her sweet rural scenes unsullied by the breath of war or revolution. Never was he happier than in some stately English home, or indulging in day-dreams amid the beechwoods to the nightingale's

lament. His love-match with the accomplished Princess Charlotte of Prussia gave full scope to this inborn chivalry and yearning for affection. Becoming her husband at twenty-one, he yielded to her gentle influence; and the asperities of his nature were never displayed in the home where his affections centred. Often he returned to his palace, after an endless round of parades and inspections, with a gloomy brow; but irritation vanished when he reached that haven. Intimates who heard him singing to his wife's accompaniment, or saw him painting battle-pieces under her eye, failed to recognise the inexorable martinet of the parade-ground. As years went on, the young Grand Duke was given a larger share of responsibility: but he regarded the Tsar as a father rather than with fraternal love, and was never so near his person as a Secretary of State or aide-de-camp. This ignorance of administrative routine was a sore stumbling-block on his accession to the throne. "Do not be surprised," he said to his Council, "if my new duties appear stranger to me than to my Ministers. I am not apt to lean on others; but for a time I must submit to being led, and learn my task by degrees."

His first lesson was that proclaimed in the Square of the Senate on December 26. Nicholas began his reign by stifling revolution, and he consecrated it to combating the beginnings wherever he detected them. He carried on the policy of reaction commenced by Alexander, but without his scruples and his occasional reversions towards the liberal dreams of an ardent youth.

With his colossal form tightly buckled up in uniform, he delighted to pose as Sovereign-Pontiff before subjects who stood amazed at his passion for work and for military parade. Thus was slowly evolved the finished type of an old-world despot, the incarnation of a ceaseless struggle against thought and progress. The Tsar was loath to separate himself from his brother's advisers; and the Ministers for the most part retained their portfolios. Arakchiev, however, was dismissed, and



spent his last years in devotion to Alexander's memory. His successor was the venerable Speranski, who found old hatreds dead and won universal respect by his mild frankness and richly-stored mind. Nicholas's other intimates were the timid Nesselrode, Pozzo di Borgo, whose craft was equal to Metternich's, and Menshikov, a cynic of brilliant parts. The earliest domestic measures of the reign displayed the ultra-conservative spirit which was to be its keynote. A ukase abolished the branches of the Bible Society established under Alexander's patronage. There was no longer any question of promoting schismatic missions; and a rigid press censorship was set on foot. But greater attention was given to hospitals and female education; and the Tsar took especial pains to eradicate the abuses prevalent in every department. He organised a special police in order to search them out; and ordered that discoveries should be reported to him without the names of the persons implicated.

The question of Greek independence was one of extreme urgency, for it had brought Russia to the brink of a war with Turkey. Nicholas made overtures for common action to Great Britain, a Power which above all others he admired and respected; and Canning despatched the Duke of Wellington to St Petersburg with instructions to establish a basis. The great soldier's diplomacy was by no means equal to Nesselrode's; and he was induced to subscribe to a measure which lessened his country's influence in the East. The Anglo-Russian Protocol of April 4, 1826, provided that Greece should be autonomous under the Sultan's suzerainty and governed by representatives elected under Turkish supervision. It was at the same time understood that Great Britain should abstain from interference in disputes between Russia and Turkey arising from the non-observance of the Treaty of Bucharest (1812). Thus Russia succeeded in separating the Greek dispute from the rest of the Eastern Question, and gained a free hand at Constantinople, of which she was not slow to take

advantage. Her *chargé d'affaires* there presented a note to the Porte on April 6, embodying his master's special demands—the restoration of Moldo-Wallachia, as it existed prior to Ypsilanti's invasion, the independence of Servia, and the execution of the clauses of the Treaty of Bucharest securing a right of way to Russian strong places on the Black Sea.

The Anglo-Russian Protocol was energetically supported by Charles X of France, whose absolutist instincts placed him in close sympathy with Russian policy; and it was pressed upon the Porte by the representatives of the three Powers. It was rejected on the score that it was a violation of the passive obedience due by subjects to their Sovereign. After throwing down the gauntlet, the Sultan Mahmud II resolved to set his house in order for the coming fray. He convened the chief civil and spiritual authorities of the empire, and laid before them a scheme for the reorganisation of the army on a European model. Their approval was prompt and obsequious; but they reckoned without a force which had defied the Sultans at the apogee of their power and had defeated a similar attempt at reform in 1807. The Janissaries regarded the step as an infringement of their privileges; and on June 14, 1826, they assembled, overturned their camp-kettles in the Hippodrome as a signal for mutiny, destroyed the Grand Vizier's palace, and prepared to storm the Seraglio. Mahmud saw his opportunity of crushing the one obstacle to his cherished designs. He unfurled the Standard of the Prophet, while the Vizier established his head-quarters in the Mosque of Ahmad near the scene of disorder. The city gates were shut, and artillery was massed at points commanding the rebels' barricade. At the stroke of noon a tremendous fire was opened. The Janissaries sought refuge in their barracks, which were soon wrapped in flames, and cannon played on them incessantly for several hours. Three thousand were slain on the spot, and eight thousand more were taken and hanged. On June 17 the disbandment of this Pretorian Guard was decreed. Thus

vanished a force which for five centuries had been the bulwark and the terror of Ottoman power.

On learning this tragedy, Nicholas divined that the hour for action had come. The old force had been blotted out; a blow must be struck ere the new was organised. He took a high tone, threatening immediate war unless delegates were sent to negotiate a treaty at some point on the Russian frontier. Mahmud was too conscious of his weakness to refuse. A Conference opened at Akerman in Bessarabia, the Russian representatives being Voronzov and Ribeaupierre, ambassador-elect at Constantinople. Their Turkish colleagues were at first compliant; but, when the cession was demanded of certain points on the Black Sea essential to the occupation of Georgia but not mentioned in the Treaty of Bucharest (1812), a stubborn resistance was encountered. Voronzov remarked that his master, foreseeing that the negotiations would be intentionally protracted, had ordered the utmost limits of concession to be set forth in a single document. A draft Convention embodying them was delivered to the Sultan's representatives; and six weeks were given for its execution, with war as the alternative. Mahmud dissembled the indignation excited by these manœuvres, and affixed his signature on October 7, 1826, the day before the expiration of the delay accorded. Under the Convention of Akerman the Treaty of Bucharest received confirmation. Servia was rendered virtually independent of the Porte. Moldavia and Wallachia were placed under Hospodars elected by an assembly of notables; and an enquiry by the Russian Ambassador was made essential to their dismissal from office. The coveted ports on the Black Sea littoral were surrendered to Russia; and merchant vessels of all nations secured the right of passing the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. No reference was made in this agreement to the affairs of Greece; for it was the traditional policy of Russia to leave certain questions undecided, that they might be reopened brusquely when circumstances should allow. Ratifications

were duly exchanged; and Ribeaupierre took possession of the Russian embassy at Constantinople, to which he had been appointed by the Tsar Alexander in 1825.

War, averted for the moment in Turkey, broke out with another great Mahommedan power. The annexation of Georgia in 1802 had led to perpetual boundary disputes with Persia, which at Napoleon's instigation plunged into hostilities in 1811. After two years, fraught with disaster to his armies, the Shah concluded peace under the Treaty of Gulistan (Oct. 1813), surrendering to Russia a slice of territory on the western shores of the Caspian, which included Baku, afterwards famous for its petroleum deposits. But the marches were still undefined, and the border tribes were unsubdued, giving allegiance in turns to the Power whom it suited them to acknowledge. The tension rose to such a point that, in the last year of his life, Alexander I appointed a commission to demarcate the Russo-Persian frontier. Shah Fattah Ali was provoked by the endless delays encountered and by the overbearing attitude of the Governor-General of the Caucasus, and believed his infantry, drilled after the European style, to be invincible. He heard garbled versions of the rising on Alexander's death, and of the diplomatic conflict with Turkey, and imagined the hour had come to try conclusions with his troublesome neighbour. In vain did Nicholas, who had his hands full at Constantinople, endeavour to appease Fattah Ali's resentment by sending Menshikov to treat with him. In September 1826 the Shah proclaimed war with Russia; and the Prince Royal crossed the Araxes at the head of 60,000 men, with a view to detaching the newly-annexed territories on the east of the Caucasus from Russian authority. His triumphal march on Tiflis was stayed by the splendid valour of the garrison of Chucha, which gave General Paskiévich time to collect his scattered forces. With only 24,000 men he defeated the Persian vanguard near Elizabetopol, and pursuing his advantage he drove the invading army across the Araxes. Content with

these successes he went into winter quarters and prepared for a campaign in the following year.

Paskiévích's triumph emboldened Nicholas to intervene in the Greek struggle for independence. The Courts of London, Vienna, and Berlin were invited to instruct their representatives at a Congress discussing the Eastern Question in London to press for a solution. Charles X was staunch to the Russian alliance; and his ambassador at Constantinople informed the Sultan that his master considered the pacification of Greece a necessary complement to the terms agreed upon at Akerman. He found Turkey by no means so pliant as she had proved towards Russia. In point of fact, the separatist movement in Greece was languishing. The English partisans were disgusted with the conduct of the war; and, while the insurgents' ranks included a handful of patriots cast in the ancient mould, such as Canaris and Miaulis, their leaders were for the most part cowardly brigands. A Turko-Egyptian fleet held the seas; and Athens, closely beleaguered, was about to surrender. The Sultan therefore plucked up courage and pronounced the Anglo-Russian Protocol an insult. He pointed out that foreign interference in his domestic concerns was as unpalatable to him as England would find that of Turkey in her dispute with Irish Catholics. This stubbornness moved the London Congress to declare that, as the Sultan refused to pacify Greece, the task must be performed by others. On July 6, 1827, a treaty was signed between Russia, England, and France, which embodied the terms of the Protocol. The signatories imposed their mediation on the belligerents, and reduced the sovereignty of Turkey over Greece to a suzerainty. An understanding so close between Russia and the West had not been seen since the close of the struggle with Napoleon. It was cemented by a visit paid to England by the Tsar during the same month, which enabled him to renew friendships formed with the Tory aristocracy in 1814.

The Treaty of London came as a thunderbolt on Metternich,

who at first declined to believe its existence. He endeavoured to detach Nicholas from the new alliance by enlarging on the traditional selfishness of British policy. Finding this manœuvre of no avail, he induced the Emperor Francis to turn a deaf ear to Russian overtures. In vain did Nicholas assure him that he was not aiming at the destruction of the Ottoman Empire. Austria refused to sign the Treaty of London, on the plea that her principles forbade her to assist rebels against their lawful rulers, and she dissuaded Prussia from joining the coalition. Metternich then turned his attention to Turkey, leading the Sultan to believe that the alliance between the Naval Powers was necessarily insecure, and encouraging him to resist the proposed mediation. The Allies had no resource but a display of armed might. Admirals Codrington and De Rigny, who commanded the English and French squadrons in Eastern waters, received instructions which were lamentably ambiguous. They were told to open relations with the Greek troops and to prevent their foes from landing reinforcements, but to avoid acts of hostility against the Porte. Nicholas was more circumspect. His naval commander was forbidden to give either side any grounds for assigning to the Russian squadron the smallest share in the issue of the war. The Turkish generalissimo was Ibrahim Pasha, a worthy son of Mehemet Ali, the lion-hearted ruler of Egypt. He had overrun the Morea with a Turko-Egyptian army, and was not disposed to accept orders from a Christian admiral. On Oct. 20, 1827, he encountered the allied fleets in the Bay of Navarino. The brunt of the battle fell on the English and French vessels, which burnt, sank, and destroyed the enemies' ships, dealing a mortal blow to the sea-power of Turkey. The Tsar's prescience led him to detect the advantage gained by Russia from the precipitate action of the Naval Powers. He sent the two highest decorations in his gift to the allied admirals, and congratulated them on a victory which would be hailed by civilised Europe. The British Government, now deprived of Canning's vigorous leadership,

regretted the result of Navarino, which was branded as an "untoward event" in the King's speech to his Parliament; and Great Britain stood aloof from the subsequent developments of the war. The actual liberation of Greek soil was accomplished mainly by the French Government, which in 1828 sent an expeditionary force to the Morea, and cleared it of the Turkish and Egyptian invaders. Meanwhile a general assembly had elected Capodistrias (April 1827) President of the Hellenic Republic for seven years.

Thus Nicholas's ambition was crowned with a success beyond his warmest hopes. At very slight expense he had gratified his subjects' aspirations by relieving their Greek co-religionists from the Musulman yoke, established Russian influence on the Balkans, and secured access for his troops to the heart of the Caucasus. He had no longer to fear the jealousy of the Western Powers in the path of Russian advance in an easterly and southerly direction. Charles X hoped to gain Russian support in his design to annex Belgium and the left bank of the Rhine, and he acquiesced in a blockade established by Russia of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles.

This measure was rendered necessary by the imminence of war with Turkey. The battle of Navarino served only to exasperate the Sultan. Vainly did the Powers inform him of their desire to preserve peace. He demanded as a preliminary to any negotiations a renunciation of interference in the affairs of Greece, a public apology for the insult offered to his flag, and compensation for the destruction of his fleet. Knowing full well that compliance was not to be looked for, he declared relations with the signatory Powers suspended, proclaimed a Holy War, and ordered a general levy. The ambassadors quitted Constantinople; and both sides prepared for the coming struggle. Nicholas was aware that Turkey, weakened as she was, must be met with the whole force of his empire; and Paskiévich was ordered to press matters in Asia to a speedy conclusion. He crossed the Araxes, capturing 10,000

Persians who sought to dispute the passage, stormed Erivan, the bulwark of the Empire, and entered its second city, Tabriz. The Shahzada, bewildered by these unlooked-for successes, sued for peace; and the preliminaries were actually signed when his father received assurances of support from the Sultan and broke off negotiations. Paskiévich's profound knowledge of the native character stood him in good stead. Though his rear was threatened by an insurrection among the Kurds and Lesghians, and winter snows hampered his commissariat, he marched directly on Teheran. Fattéh Ali was panic-stricken and sent envoys to treat for peace. On February 22, 1828, the Treaty of Turkmanchai ceded to Russia the provinces of Erivan and Nakhichevan, and permitted her to occupy Azarbaijan until the payment of a war indemnity. The Caspian, hitherto a Persian lake, was opened to Russian vessels. Since Turkmanchai the Shahs have always proved obedient vassals.

These victories paved the way for a declaration of war with Turkey. On April 26, 1828, the Tsar issued a manifesto in which he blamed her blind hostility for the step which he was "regretfully" compelled to take. He immediately crossed the Pruth with 60,000 men, attended by a brilliant court and the whole Diplomatic Corps. Though a chain of fortresses protected the Danube, the invading army was destitute of siege artillery. This overweening confidence cost Russia dear, for the Turks are among the best troops in the world when protected by entrenchments. After winning a few paltry successes they sat down before the Danubian citadels. Braila defended itself heroically till June; Shumla and Silistria successfully withstood prolonged sieges; and Varna was only surrendered by treachery after holding out nearly as long; while a Russian force, which Nicholas ordered to attack the Turks under Omer Pasha advancing to the relief of Varna, suffered a severe defeat.

The Russian advance was sorely hampered by the jealousy of Austria, which massed troops on the right flank in Transsylv-



vania and deprived Russia of the faculty of using the Danube as a base. Threatened with war by Russia, Metternich promised to observe a strict neutrality. Armed intervention was indeed incompatible with his policy of making cat's-paws of other Powers. He proceeded, therefore, by oblique methods, and endeavoured to detach England and France from his hated rival. His suggestion of a Congress met with a flat refusal from both; the Duke of Wellington, who now ruled the Foreign Office, declaring that he was bound by the Treaty of London to act in concert with Russia. These intrigues provoked an energetic remonstrance from Nesselrode; and Metternich, finding himself impotent to stay the march of events, was reduced to offer excuses. But, though the nightmare of Austrian intervention was banished, the military situation did not immediately improve. All was chaos on the Danube; the hospitals were gorged with sick and wounded; the confidence of the troops was impaired by the delays and disasters. Turkey showed that she possessed unsuspected reserves of strength; and the immense levies made for the defence of Constantinople were still intact. Happily for Russia she possessed in Paskiévich, created Count Erivanski, a leader formed to battle successfully with an Oriental Power. He cajoled and intimidated his foes by using craft and brutality as circumstances dictated. His soldiers were fascinated with his bravery and by the skill with which he appealed to the passions, now gratifying their sensual appetites, now appealing to religion and the thirst for glory. At the end of June, 1828, he led 12,000 men into Asiatic Turkey from the frontier post of Alexandropol and captured Kars after four days' investment. Here an outbreak of plague caused a few weeks' delay: and, when he reached the next objective, Akhalzikh, he found 30,000 Turks massed for its protection. On August 24 he flung his slender force against the position and captured it after a hand-to-hand contest. Ardahan succumbed in its turn; and before the middle of October his right wing rested on Poti, while his left embraced Bayazid.

These distant victories did not greatly enhance Russia's prestige in the eyes of Europe; and it is highly probable that Nicholas would have welcomed peace overtures had they been made in the winter of 1828. But the Turks, elated by their defensive successes, declined to treat. With some misgivings the Tsar prepared for a second campaign in the Balkans. He delegated the chief command to General Diébitch, a Silesian Slav, who had won his gratitude by loyalty shown during the throes of the December conspiracy. Diébitch was the converse of his comrade Erivanski. Repulsive in appearance and stern in manners, he was feared and disliked by his troops; and it needed the hearty support of his master to maintain him in command. That confidence was not misplaced, for Diébitch showed that he had most of the qualities of a great general. Commencing operations at the end of May 1829, he defeated the Grand Vizier at Kulevcha, near Pravady (June 10), and hurled him back on Shumla with a loss of 5000 men and 43 guns. Then, masking the Turkish camp established there, he took Silistria, and made for the Balkans in two columns with bases at Varna and Pravady. The mountain passes might have been defended by a handful of resolute men against the imperfect appliances then at the command of Russia; but the Turks, intimidated by the rapid advance, abandoned their last line of defence. On July 24 the Russian army, after nine days' march attended by trifling losses, concentrated at Rumelikoi, in touch with the Bulgarians and the sea. But Diébitch's inborn prudence asserted itself. Three weeks of preparation elapsed ere he determined to continue his march on Adrianople. The second city of the Ottoman Empire was entered without resistance (Aug. 19); and a detachment was pushed forward on the road to Constantinople.

The pride and resolution of Sultan Mahmud II now deserted him. His reforms had raised up a host of enemies; and he felt the sword of conspiracy suspended over his head. He was misled as to the strength of the invading army. Diébitch could reckon on only 20,000 men, harassed by long marches

and privations, and decimated by disease ; but the Prussian General Müffling, despatched from Berlin to convince the Sultan of the folly of resistance, persuaded him that the Russians were 60,000 strong. Diébitch played to perfection the part of a victorious general within two days' march of his goal, albeit that Constantinople held half a million fanatical inhabitants. The Sultan, deceived by his advisers, made overtures for peace : and on Sept. 14, 1829, a treaty was signed by the Turkish plenipotentiaries at Adrianople. Under this instrument the Porte subscribed to the Treaty of London, thus yielding independence to Greece. By other articles of the treaty she surrendered the islands of the Danubian delta, together with Poti, Anapa, Akhalzikh, and Akhalkali in Asiatic Turkey. The pledges given at Akerman regarding Moldavia and Wallachia were reaffirmed ; but the Hospodars were thenceforward to be elected for life. The Principalities were placed under Russian protection, with the right to occupy them until a war indemnity of £4,750,000 was paid. Merchant ships belonging to Powers at peace with Turkey obtained the right of passing the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus. The Treaty of Adrianople revealed a degree of moderation which surprised and delighted the Turks. The truth was that Nicholas was aware that exorbitant demands might drive Turkey to take up arms again, and that the weakness of the military situation would come to light. The war had cost him 120,000 out of the 140,000 troops engaged.

The issue of the Russo-Turkish war threw Metternich into consternation. He regarded it as the death-knell of Ottoman power, and in the control of the Danube secured by Russia he saw a blow struck at the roots of Austrian commerce. He represented to his master that the European alliance cemented in 1815 had been practically destroyed by the Anglo-Russian Protocol of 1826 and its logical consequences. Austria, he urged, must strengthen her military power and seek means to establish a position of her own. Overtures were made by her to England and France for concerted action against Russian

predominance in the East. But the Duke of Wellington replied that Turkey was stricken to death; that her resurrection was impossible and Greece was her natural heir. Nor was the Government of Charles X more favourably disposed. Russian prestige was high; and Charles looked to his absolutist brother for help towards regaining for France the natural frontiers lost in 1814. From Prussia Metternich could expect no complicity in his designs. She was occupied in paving the way for her future hegemony by welding the smaller German States in a customs' union; and the ties of blood which linked her dynasty with the Romanovs were strengthened by a visit paid by the Tsar to Berlin at the crisis of the Turkish campaign. In Russia Metternich's hostility was regarded as an insurmountable barrier between the two Empires. Thus at the commencement of the year 1830 the grouping of European states established at Vienna was practically destroyed; and a new combination seemed inevitable.

Up to this point everything had succeeded with Nicholas. He had crushed a plot which threatened his dynasty, and had relieved Russian policy from its degrading subservience to Metternich. Turkey and Persia were grovelling in the dust; and a footing was gained in Asia to serve as a basis for further advances. His triumph was swelled by the appearance in St Petersburg in 1829 of the Shahzada of Persia, sent by his father to implore pardon for the murder of the poet Griboiedov, ambassador at Teheran, by a mob roused to fury by the levy of the war indemnity. But calamities were in store for Russia which threw her exultation into mourning. Poland was seething with rebellion; and the Tsar congratulated himself on having secured peace with Turkey before grappling with his hereditary foe. In many respects the kingdom had gained by its union with the Russian Crown. Its finances were flourishing; and the army, 60,000 strong, formed by the Tsarevich Constantine from the remnants of Napoleon's legions, was in a high state of efficiency. But Constantine's officers were too often disgusted by his caprice; and their

untamed spirit revolted against the discipline which he enforced. He hated war because it defaced the splendid machine on which he prided himself; and, in deference to his wishes, the Tsar gave no part to Polish troops in the operations against the Sultan. This policy was unfortunate, for the stress of common danger might have produced a spirit of comradeship and filled the Poles with ardour for the Empire's cause. The absence of emulation and the means of gratifying a thirst for glory made the Polish army a willing instrument of sedition. Nor was the civil population more favourably disposed towards Russia. The nobility made a plaything of royal authority; every measure taken by the King and his advisers was watched and misinterpreted. Secret societies, with their anti-Russian propaganda, became more rampant. The disloyal spirit of the governing classes was shown in their dealings with Poles implicated in the December conspiracy. Nicholas appointed a commission to investigate its ramifications in Poland, which placed eight persons on trial before the Senate. They were acquitted with one dissentient voice—that of the Vice-President Krasinski. Nicholas's anger at this palpable miscarriage of justice was shown by his suspension of the Senate's verdict for six months. When he reluctantly sanctioned it, Krasinski was singled out for special praise. The agitation increased; and the malcontents received assurances of support from most of the Polish officers in garrison at Warsaw. They met in secret conclave; and a project was mooted of destroying the whole imperial family assembled at the forthcoming coronation of Nicholas as King of Poland.

Happily for the honour of the race, this scheme was defeated by the protests of Gustav Malakhovski and Krasinski's brother in arms, Niemciéwicz. The coronation passed off without bloodshed in the spring of 1828; but the nobles remarked with displeasure that the King was surrounded by a guard of the Smolensk regiment which had played so sinister a part in the massacre attending the storming of Warsaw by Suvorov in 1794. The investiture should, in accordance with ancient

custom, have been hailed with shouts of "Vivat Rex in æternum!" but the nobility maintained an ominous silence. Nicholas did not summon the Diet till the autumn of 1830, after an interregnum of five years. No dalliance was shown with sedition. The malcontents were told that the hoped-for enlargement of Poland by the cession of Podolia, Volhynia, and Lithuania was a chimera; that the life of the constitution depended on the use made by the Poles of their constitutional privileges. The deputies' spirit was displayed in their rejection of a law of divorce which Nicholas laid before the Diet. They impeached the ministers and demanded the surrender of the "lost provinces." Nicholas sternly rebuked them, and quitted Warsaw in disgust. His anxieties were increased by the riots which broke out on the importation of Asiatic cholera by the army which had operated in north-western Persia. The new disease baffled the physicians; and the people attributed it to poison cast into the wells. At Moscow, Novogorod, and Sebastopol the populace massacred those who were labouring for their benefit; and the riots at St Petersburg were suppressed only by Nicholas's personal intervention. On the heels of this calamity came intelligence that a revolution had broken out in France (July 1830), which sent Russia's firm ally Charles X into exile, and transferred the Crown to the Orleans dynasty. In vain did the new King Louis Philippe strive to disarm the anger of the Tsar, who saw a Jacobin taint in the July revolution. The announcement of his accession was met by a tacit reproof, and advice to adopt conservative measures. A fortnight later the Tsarevich Constantine received orders to place the Polish army on a war footing; and General Diébitch was sent to Berlin to arrange concerted action against the approaching storm. The tricolor waving on the French consulate at Warsaw was the signal of the outbreak of the Polish Rebellion.

Never had a fairer opportunity offered itself of striking a blow for independence. Had the malcontents but sunk their mutual jealousies, they might have reckoned on effective sym-

pathy from the Western Powers. But the Poles of 1830 were still dominated by a spirit of faction. There was, first, the Party of Princes, as they were contemptuously styled by the extreme section. Their leaders were the veteran Adam Czartoryski, Radzivil, illustrious by birth rather than talents, and General Chłopiński who had won renown under Napoleon's banner. These statesmen were ready for any sacrifice, but they were aware that Poland would shatter itself against the armed might of Russia, and that independence could be gained only by invoking the Treaties of Vienna and making the question a European one. A second party, known as the Moderates, fondly hoped to gain a measure of liberty by insisting on the strict observance of the Constitution of 1815. The Republicans' watchword was the abdication of the Romanovs: and they were prepared to copy every measure taken by the desperate men who brought the French Revolution to a successful issue. Their chiefs were Lelevel, Professor of History, and Zavisza, a student at the Warsaw University, together with Wysocki, belonging to the aristocratic School of Standard-Bearers. By the evolution which all such movements observe this extreme section gained the upper hand, and compelled their timid fellow-plotters to follow their lead. The long-threatened blow was struck on Nov. 29, 1830. At nightfall the youths of the School of Standard-Bearers assembled at Wysocki's bidding and attacked a regiment of Russian cavalry in their barracks, while the University students under Zavisza made for the Palace of Belvedere, occupied by the Tsarevich Constantine. Panic-stricken at the shouts of "Death to Tyrants," he fled to the apartments of his wife, the Princess Lovicz, and was not molested in his refuge. The rebels' thirst for blood was satisfied by the slaughter of the Prefect of Police and a loyal general whom they met in the palace courtyard. Then they joined Wysocki's band and charged the cavalry at the bayonet's point. The slightest display of energy on the part of the Tsarevich might have crushed

the revolt in its beginning; but he lost his head, and the Russian garrison, left without orders, were powerless to act against the handful of men who defied them. Encouraged by their attitude the Polish army and populace joined the movement; and five generals suspected of treason to the national cause were dragged from their quarters and massacred. Weapons were necessary. The mob found them in the citadel, which was surrendered by its guards, and 40,000 muskets with abundant stores of ammunition fell into their hands. Constantine was powerless in the face of rebellion, and retreated to Virzba, a village three miles from Warsaw, with 8,000 troops who remained faithful to the Russian cause. The rebels had hitherto acted without a responsible chief. On the morrow the choice fell on General Chłopiński, whose noble appearance and legendary courage had made him the people's idol. He shrank from the perilous honour, but Prince Lubeński, the Minister of Finance, a man who aimed at standing well with both sides, summoned a Council of the most prominent rebels, and insisted on Chłopiński accepting in the name of the Sovereign. The General's first step was to open negotiations with Constantine, who replied that he had no concern with Polish quarrels and asked only that the Russian garrison might be permitted to return to their own country. At the same time he sent back a regiment of Polish sharpshooters who had followed his standard. Having gained complete control of the capital, the party of revolt organised a Provisional Government, which sent Prince Lubeński and Count Jezierski to St Petersburg with an ultimatum embodying their demands for the consideration of the Tsar. Envoys were also despatched to London, Paris, and Vienna to implore the intervention of the great Powers; and the Diet was convoked for Dec. 18. In the interim Chłopiński assumed the Dictatorship, and strove to prevent his associates from taking any irretrievable steps until the return of the emissaries from St Petersburg. It soon became clear that, with many splendid



qualities, he did not possess the single-hearted resolution called for by the crisis. A soldier by birth and training, he fondly hoped to head a revolution without breaking his oath of fealty, and to secure Polish independence by invoking the Constitution of 1815. At a meeting of the Provisional Government summoned to prepare for the approaching Diet he protested against any attempt to enlarge the boundaries of the kingdom. This moderation was most obnoxious to the republican party; but such was Chłopiński's popularity that the Diet's first step was to confirm him in the office of Dictator and appoint him Commander-in-Chief. His enemies however persuaded the Assembly to follow a precedent set by the French Convention. A Committee was appointed to watch the Dictator and supersede him in case of need. Another Committee was directed to draw up a manifesto addressed to the Powers which had signed the Treaty of Vienna. This was published on January 5, 1831, and made a deep impression. The Poles, it averred, were animated by no ill-will towards their Russian brother-Slavs. In striking for freedom they appealed with confidence to the Europe which their ancestors had defended against Muscovite and Turkish aggression. "Providence had perhaps doomed the Continent to slavery; but if such were to be its lot, every patriotic Pole would find consolation in reflecting that his death-struggles had postponed the issue." Nicholas was not disposed to treat with rebels under arms; and his manifesto, which had appeared on Dec. 17, 1830, breathed all the wrath of an outraged master. "The Polish people had enjoyed peace and prosperity under his aegis, but, forgetting past misfortunes, they had again plunged into a revolution with its attendant horrors. A handful of madmen, inwardly dreading their approaching punishment, had dared for an instant to dream of victory and to propose conditions to their lawful sovereign." A few days later Field-Marshal Diébitch crossed the frontier at the head of 120,000 men and marched on Warsaw.

The Diet reassembled after a brief recess on January 13, 1831, and heard Jeziarski's account of his mission to St Petersburg. On learning that Nicholas had declined to parley and scouted the notion of enlarging Poland at the Empire's expense, the representatives threw aside the scabbard. On January 25 they decreed that the Romanovs had forfeited the throne of Poland. From that moment authority passed from the aristocratic and constitutional parties into the hands of the republican section. Chłopiński's situation became untenable. Moreover, he was in discord with his colleague Lelevel, who insisted on calling the peasantry to arms and invading the coveted provinces, Lithuania, Podolia, Volhynia. As he truly said, an insurrection which did not spread was lost. Chłopiński's military pride revolted at the thought of engaging such auxiliaries, and he resigned office. He was replaced as Commander-in-Chief by Prince Radzivil, a weak man and ignorant of strategy, whilst a National Government assumed his functions as Dictator. Its President was the old Prince Adam Czartoryski, who had striven to prevent overt rebellion and thrown in his lot with his fellow-countrymen only when they crossed the Rubicon. With him were associated Prince Barzikowski, who shared his views, Lelevel, Niémoiévski, and another deputy.

The campaign opened favourably for the national party. Diébitch's vigour was impaired by the toil and anxiety of the Turkish war, and his advance was delayed while he watched the effect of verbose proclamations. Chłopiński, who was still virtually Commander-in-Chief, defeated him at Grochov after two days' fighting (February 19-20), but failed to check the movement on Warsaw. Two days later the Russian vanguard was within striking distance of the Praga suburb, which had been Suvorov's objective in 1794. Then Radzivil resigned his command to General Skrzynecki, whose superior skill led him to take advantage of a blunder committed by Diébitch. Instead of concentrating his forces on the siege of Warsaw the

Russian leader abandoned the line of the Vistula and spread them out into three weak columns. One of these under General Geismar was defeated at Vaver on March 31, when all the Russian positions were carried after two days' fighting. A second, commanded by General Rosen, was routed on the same day at Dembevilkié. The Provisional Government sent an expedition to raise Volhynia under Dverniçki; while another was led by Dembinski into Lithuania. A fierce revolt began on both frontiers, and for a moment the success of the revolution seemed assured.

Europe, however, did not respond to the agonised appeals of a people struggling for existence. In point of fact an irretrievable mistake had been made in the decree which deprived the Romanovs of the throne. It cut the ground from the feet of the signatories at Vienna, who had given Poland independence under the sovereignty of the Russian Imperial House. The Powers, indeed, had held their hand when, a few months earlier, the engagements of 1815 were infringed by the separation of Belgium from the Netherlands. The Marquis Vilepolkski was perfectly justified in asking Lord Palmerston whether Poland was to stand alone in invoking common principles of justice. But diplomacy is generally selfish and pusillanimous; and the Diet's one false move was seized upon by the Powers as a pretext for confining themselves to platonic sympathy. A half-hearted attempt to pacify Nicholas was made by the English and French Ambassadors, who reminded him that Poland was an independent State, called into being by the Vienna Congress, and that the present rebellion was no excuse for his refusal to carry out its stipulations. The Tsar assured them that he had no intention of infringing the treaties by incorporating Poland with his Empire; but his tone changed when the first Russian successes were reported. On May 26 Skrzyneçki attacked Diébitch's right wing at Ostrolenka, but was driven across the river Narev with heavy loss. Nicholas promptly declared that he would

tolerate no foreign intervention in the affairs of Poland. Mutual jealousies precluded all hope of joint action by England and France; and other attempts made by the Poles to secure moral support failed as miserably. Pope Gregory XVI, when asked to mediate in favour of a race which had always been a bulwark of Catholicism, replied coldly that he could do nothing for Poland. Metternich's craft was no match for the iron will of Nicholas; and an attempt on Austria's part to secure conditions for the rebels came too late to postpone their country's doom. As for Prussia, she was an active ally of the Tsar, furnishing the Russians with military stores of all kinds, and guarding her frontier against violation by the Poles. They were left to struggle unaided.

It must be admitted that the country stood in more need of self-discipline and united councils than of external help. The reverses that followed the illusory gleam of victory evoked shrieks of treason and paralysed consistent resolve. Skrzynecki failed to pursue the advantage gained at Vaver and Dembevilikié, and gave but a languid support to his lieutenants despatched to stir up the provinces which had once been part of Poland. Dvernički was driven by the Russians from Volhynia across the Austrian frontier. Dembinski was defeated near Vilna, and the bulk of his forces found a prison in unfriendly Prussia. One division alone, with its leader, reached Warsaw after encountering hairbreadth escapes. Diébitch, however, on his part proved supine; and Ostrolenka had no immediate result. Shortly afterwards he was carried off by cholera, and the Tsarevich Constantine succumbed to the same disease. Princess Lovicz was given an asylum in the Palace of Zarskoj Selo: but in a few weeks she followed her ill-fated husband to the tomb.

Diébitch was succeeded by Paskievich, Count Erivanski, his rival in the glory of Eastern warfare: and a change for the better took place in the conduct of the campaign. Strong in the support of Prussia, the new Generalissimo crossed the

Vistula below Warsaw and moved by its left bank on the capital. All was confusion there. The Diet, travestying the Roman Senate's action, sent a deputation to Skrzynecki when the news of Ostrolenka reached them, to thank him that he had not despaired of the Republic. Encouraged by this mark of confidence he dismissed General Krukowiecki, military governor of Warsaw, who had ventured to criticise his operations. When the Diet heard of the defeat at Vilna, a cry of treason was raised, and Skrzynecki's resignation was demanded. The National Government yielded, and sent a Commission of 66 deputies to the head-quarters' camp at Bolinov, which opened an inquiry into the General's conduct, recording the evidence of private soldiers against him. He was deprived of his command, which passed to Dembinski, leader of the abortive expedition into Lithuania. The new commander's first step was to concentrate his forces for the defence of Warsaw. Its inhabitants were thunderstruck at the abandonment of the position in the field, and their rage at the presumed treachery knew no bounds. On August 15 a mob composed of all classes burst into the gaols and stormed the houses of men whom they suspected of sympathy with Russia. Hundreds were slaughtered, and neither age nor sex was spared. In dismay the Diet appointed Krukowiecki as its President with dictatorial powers, disregarding the protest of Czartoryski and his colleagues on the Provisional Government. The Dictator superseded Dembinski by Casimir Malakhovski, and restored a semblance of order by executing the ringleaders in the massacre of August 15. But the approaching end was heralded by the thunder of Paskievich's cannon. The Poles anticipated an attack on the Praga quarter, as in 1794; but Paskievich finding it protected by the Vistula, opened trenches against the Czysté and Vola suburbs, guarded only by improvised fortifications. On September 4 he demanded the unconditional surrender of the city; but the Diet refused to yield on any terms other than those of their January manifesto.

At dawn on September 6 a storm of shot and shell was poured into Warsaw from 350 cannon. The Poles' resistance was heroic; and foremost amongst them fell Wysocki, who had been the life and soul of the revolt. At three o'clock there was a lull in the battle, and Krukowiecki was sent with a colleague to Paskievich's quarters to arrange terms of surrender. The Russian General refused all conditions, and demanded the restoration of the bridge which connected Praga with the open country; but he finally conceded an armistice to admit of a reference to the Diet. That body met and its debates continued until the delay accorded had expired. The bombardment was then renewed with greater fury; and so hopeless seemed the situation that on the evening of September 7 the assembly conferred full authority to treat on Krukowiecki. His proud spirit was crushed, and he addressed a letter to Nicholas offering unreserved submission and imploring mercy for his distracted country. Hardly was the mission despatched when the Diet revoked Krukowiecki's powers and ordered him to resign his command to General Niemojowski. The change brought no relief to the beleaguered garrison; and on the morning of September 8, 1831, the Russians were in the act of scaling the ramparts when the white flag was exhibited. Malakhowski signed a capitulation, and Paskievich reported to his master that Warsaw was at his feet. The garrison, which still numbered 30,000 men, evacuated the city and concentrated at Plock, where it was attacked by Paskievich with overwhelming forces. Two-thirds of the Polish army laid down their arms; and General Ramorino, on whose staff old Czartoryski was serving, led the remainder into Austrian Galicia, where Skrzynecki had already found a refuge. Thus the Polish rebellion of 1831 ended, as it had begun, in bloodshed. Those who directed it had shown the traditional bravery of their race on the battlefield. But they wanted the civic virtues which alone can secure and build up a country's independence. Unable to sink private resentments in the face of common peril, to

preserve self-control in victory or fortitude in defeat, the Poles of 1831 were their own worst enemies. Not for the first time did they prove themselves incapable of guiding their destinies.

The Tsar took a stern pleasure in convincing the revolutionary spirit still rampant in Europe that he had both the will and the power to repress its manifestations. On November 30, 1831, he issued a proclamation which was ironically styled an Act of Amnesty, for it shut the gates of mercy on all who had fomented the insurrection, taken part in the massacre of August 15, or voted the dethronement of his dynasty. The gaols and monasteries of Warsaw were soon gorged with prisoners, thousands of whom were sent to lifelong exile in Siberia. The Tsar's policy towards the prostrate kingdom showed the influence exercised over his mind by the Old Russian Party, which since the days of Peter the Great had lifted its voice in protest against French fashions and German bureaucracy. Bitter experience had taught him that nations borrow from each other little save their vices; that Russia must be self-sufficing, and that her civilisation should rest on foundations laid by her national genius and the national history. It followed logically that the conflicting elements throughout the Empire must be welded into a harmonious whole; and Russification was thenceforward the keynote of his attitude towards Poland. A ukase of February 26, 1832, removed her from the list of nations; and its 69 clauses, styled organic statutes, destroyed the last vestiges of her separate existence. The Constitution of 1815 was swept away; the departments of State became commissions of the Ministries at St Petersburg. Local administration was entrusted to a Russian Viceroy, aided by a council composed of members of these commissions. The Diet was abolished; the ancient palatinates became Russian provinces. The Polish army was merged into that of Russia; the national flag was suppressed; and the imperial systems of taxation, justice, and coinage were imposed on Poland. These levelling ordinances

culminated in ukases which drafted Polish orphans to the military colonies and transplanted 45,000 Polish families to the Don and the Caucasus. The abettors of the revolution were pursued with relentless vigour. In thousands of cases confiscation and lifelong banishment were decreed: nor did the Tsar disdain to enhance penalties which he held to be inadequate. Death sentences were recorded against all who evaded their doom by flight, and the Polish refugees, despairing of return to their fatherland, spread over Europe, exciting detestation of their oppressors in every land.

In his wish to rally all the forces within his grasp against the revolutionary hydra Nicholas did not neglect those of religion. He demanded a public reprobation of the Polish rising from Pope Gregory XVI, who issued a circular to his clergy ascribing the calamities of the kingdom to "falsehoods propagated against the legitimate sovereign." This complaisance was rewarded by a proscription of his creed. An Autocrat who assumes the functions of Supreme Pontiff is doubly bound to bring all his subjects within the Church's fold, for he finds it impossible to distinguish between nonconformity and sedition. The conquest of alien races and the emotional side of the Slav character had conspired to multiply creeds. The Tatars and Kirghiz were Muhammadans; the Kalmucks, and the tribes of the far East and Central Asia were followers of Buddha; and Lutheranism was professed by the German colonies in the south of European Russia. In these cases persecution was needless, for the creed was not associated with manifestations of the national spirit. The great bulk of Russian subjects were attached to the Orthodox faith, but a strong minority held the most fantastic dogmas. Old Believers, divided into sections which rejected and accepted priestly ordinances, Milk-drinkers, Communists, Leapers, Runners, Flagellants, and Castrates—such dissidents as these outraged the Tsar's religious and absolutist instincts. The vials of his wrath fell first on the Uniate Greeks of Lithuania, which was once a Polish palatinate



and had shown sympathy with the rebellion. Their Church was the outcome of a compromise effected in 1596, under which the Lithuanian orthodox acknowledged the Pope's supremacy while they retained the ancient Slavonic tongue in their ritual, and priests were permitted to marry. This last concession proved the ruin of the Uniates, for the strength of Catholicism lies in its celibate clergy, impervious to the blandishments of the world and drilled as a vast army to obey a spiritual chief. The Tsar commenced his reign with an oblique attempt to destroy an organisation which fostered distinctive national inspirations. He now brought more direct inducements to bear. The University of Vilna was suppressed, and the Polish language replaced by Russian in the schools. The populations of entire villages which refused to admit the nuptial benediction of orthodox priests were deported to Siberia, and rewards were showered on Russian officials who were able to report numerous conversions. These stringent measures led the Uniate Church in 1839 to frame a Synodal Act, recording its deliverance from slavery to the Roman Pontiff.

Stimulated by his success in Lithuania the Tsar turned his attention to the Lutherans of the Baltic Provinces. Their inhabitants were admittedly loyal and highly educated, while their belief was protected by solemn engagements. Nevertheless an orthodox bishop was installed at Riga in 1839. The army of proselytisers made use of the distress entailed by a famine in 1841 to bring thousands of peasants within the pale of the Greek Church. With the same object they exploited the race-hatred engendered by the incomplete emancipation of the serfs, which gave them personal liberty but left the land in the possession of an alien lord. While such means were taken with a peaceful and obedient population, it was not to be expected that Poland would be left in unmolested exercise of her creed. The clergy who appealed to the guarantees given at the first Partition of 1773 were told that by stimulating

rebellion they had abrogated all preceding engagements. Churches were therefore despoiled, convents suppressed, and the presence of an orthodox priest was insisted on in all mixed marriages. No unauthorised tutor was allowed in private families, and sermons were subjected to a censorship. The faculty of remarriage was given to the wives of political exiles, provided they undertook to bring up the children in the Greek faith; and conformity thereto secured liberation to the worst criminals. These measures defeated their framer's object by excessive severity. Not for the first time in the world's history did persecution blow the embers of smouldering faith. If the Polish Rebellion of 1831 was of its nature political, that of 1863 had a distinctly religious origin.

The domestic policy of Nicholas I was framed in the same spirit of reaction. He loved Russia, and was convinced that he was the instrument chosen by Providence to render her glorious and happy. A belief so ingrained necessarily led to the adoption of measures tending to increase the sphere of his will and subject every authority to his personal control. The great wheels of State continued to move for form's sake. The Council of State met regularly to register resolutions in the framing of which it had no share; and the Senate was still ostensibly a ruling body.

But all real power was gradually absorbed by the Personal Chancellery, which was divided into six sections. The first carried on the autocrat's private correspondence and watched over the execution of his behests by the Ministers. A second was occupied in codifying the 31,000 ukases in which the laws of Russia were embodied. In 1834 this gigantic task was completed under the supervision of its President, Count Speranski, whom the Tsar rewarded with his own Cross of St Andrew. Another, known throughout Europe as the Third Section, was directed by the Tsar's devoted follower Count Benckendorf, who was at the head of an army of unavowed police agents—a standing evidence of the distrust of the

Russian people engendered in the Tsar's mind by the December conspiracy. The fourth division supervised schools, hospitals, and asylums; the fifth managed the State domains and peasants' affairs; and the last was concerned with those of the Caucasus and Asia. The Tsar was not content with heightening the influence of the great departments. Like Louis XIV, whose religious policy he unconsciously imitated, he undermined the power of the nobility by largely increasing their numbers. An instrument for the purpose was ready to hand in the bureaucratic hierarchy termed "Chin," founded by Peter the Great in 1721. This graduated list was modernised; and nobility was restricted to the first five classes. No power was permitted to intervene between the autocrat and his subjects. He strove to protect them against Western contagion, to seal his Empire hermetically to all influences hostile to his system. A ukase of 1835 imposed passports on Russians wishing to reside abroad. The cost was heavy; and permission depended on the imperial will. These passports needed yearly renewal, and the maximum term for which they were granted was five years. Absentees who outstaid their leave ran the risk of seeing their estates sequestered. Yet more rigid were the restrictions imposed on the ingress of foreigners. On arrival they were closely questioned as to their motives for visiting Russia; and infinite annoyance resulted from the constant examination of their papers. They were unable to leave the Empire until possible creditors had been warned by an advertisement of their intended departure. Baggage was ransacked in order to detect forbidden literature, which was another of Nicholas's bugbears. He placed the Press in heavy fetters. A special committee examined all books and newspaper articles as a preliminary to the regular censor's imprimatur; and after the fatal year 1848 literature ran the gauntlet of two committees. Newspaper editors were regarded as agents of the Government, and wrote in a deadening atmosphere of suspicion. They were

forbidden to animadvert on any measure adopted by the Tsar ; to reflect, however obliquely, on dynasties allied with the imperial House. With such drawbacks it is hardly surprising that journals should have been few in number and their utterances devoid of colour.

But it was not Nicholas's desire to keep his people altogether in ignorance. He favoured research of all descriptions provided that it did not stray into illicit channels. The reviews published with this end were numerous, and never was so much learning and brilliancy buried in ephemeral literature. The citizens of Tobolsk could read Walter Scott and Dickens in Russian garb, and enjoy scientific criticism as incisive as that of London or Paris. Unfitted as he was by education to shine in the field of letters, the Tsar systematically favoured their development ; and his reign was the Augustan age of Russia. Soloviev then commenced his national history ; and Polevoi anticipated our own John Richard Green in essaying to trace the evolution of his country's life. Such writers were patronised because they incited Russia to fight with her own weapons, and widened the abyss which separated her from revolution. Poetry, too, won imperial favour, for it was generally in accord with the autocrat's designs. Pushkin celebrated the Poles' discomfiture as a defiance of Western liberalism. He was recalled from banishment inflicted during the previous reign for a libel on Arakchiev. This sweet singer and Lermontov were the pillars of the romantic school, just as Byron and Scott were in our own country, and Hugo, Lamartine, and De Musset in France. Jukovsky, author of the National Anthem, "God protect the Tsar," was tutor of the imperial children and a Privy Councillor.

Among novelists Dostoievski stirred the national conscience with "The Poor" ; and Turgueniev prepared the way for the liberation of the serfs by his "Memoirs of a Huntsman." The drama was accorded wider licence. Nicholas was not averse to exposures of official corruption, and he is said to have enjoyed

the scathing attack on provincial government delivered in Gogol's "Inspector General." It is true that authors who were too plain-spoken incurred displeasure. Lermontov was banished to the Caucasus for invoking vengeance on the man who slew Pushkin in a duel; and a formal inquiry into Chaadaev's mental state was ordered because he publicly despaired of his country's future. Even the Slavophil party, which originated in Nicholas's declared policy, was not exempt from vexation. When their propaganda spread to Dalmatians, Croats, and Bohemians, the Tsar's good sense told him that these distant relatives would not exchange the Austrian yoke for his own. He encouraged Slavophilism in so far as it abetted his dream of unification, but rebuked its appeals to revolutionary passion. In 1846 he suppressed a society named after Cyril and Methodus, the Byzantine missionaries who preached Christianity to heathen Russia.

The trend of public instruction was watched as closely. Nicholas regarded the Universities as hot-beds of revolution, and tried to disarm this tendency by imposing high fees and limiting the number of students. In his opinion an average of 300 at each centre would suffice to maintain a supply of public servants. An addition was, however, made to the meagre list by the creation of a University at Kiev in lieu of one which was suppressed at Vilna after the Polish rebellion. Their status improved vastly when students of the upper classes poured in under the persuasion of Count Uvarov, President of the Academy of Sciences. Philosophy might be taught by ecclesiastics alone; and no one was permitted to engage in tutorships without a University certificate. The Tsar laboured to protect Russian youth from revolutionary contagion by forbidding them to attend foreign universities without his special sanction. He aimed at elevating the standard of secondary education by multiplying normal schools; and founded one for teaching law as well as a technical institute. In all establishments under state supervision the Russian

language and history were taught in preference to the foreign or classical tongues. The nature of the political instruction meted out is indicated by the following extract from a catechism imposed by Nicholas on all schools.—*Q.* “What does religion teach us as our duty to the Tsar?” *A.* “Worship, fidelity, the payment of taxes, service, love, and prayer; the whole being comprised in the words worship and fidelity.” Nicholas’s attention was given chiefly to military education; and the Russian army schools were the best in Europe. The officers were devoted to their Tsar, and a spirit of emulation sprang up among them which bore good fruit during the earlier campaigns. He had an inherited love of routine and parades. He delighted in manipulating the machine of aggression handed down to him, and his noble figure was never seen to such advantage as at the reviews to which he gave a large amount of his time. That the navy was not neglected was proved by the heroism shown by the crews of the Black Sea fleet during the Crimean War.

But the efficiency of every branch of administration suffered from excessive centralisation, and the master’s tendency to interfere in the smallest details. Routine became more complex; and official delays taxed the patience of his subjects, who are rendered very tolerant in this respect by the oriental strain in their character. Judges were miserably paid, and their proceedings were veiled in secrecy; hence justice was unblushingly sold to the highest bidder. These abuses were fostered by the absence of fearless criticism. An absolute government has no foe more deadly than a free Press.

Nevertheless his country’s welfare was ever near to the heart of Nicholas. He was a humanitarian in times when the English penal code was still permeated with barbarous insensibility. In 1826 the punishment of death was abolished save in cases of high treason. If Nicholas failed to relieve the peasantry from their bondage, the fault lay with the obstinacy of those who thwarted his will. Six Committees were appointed in succession to study the problems of serfage; but the results were small

because Russia was unripe for this reform. In 1841 the sale of peasants with the estates on which they lived was forbidden ; and ukases of 1845-8 recognised their right to own land with the lord's consent. But for the revolutionary movement of 1848 it is certain that Nicholas would have taken measures to wipe away the national reproach. Russia owes many of her chief public buildings to his grandiose conceptions. At St Petersburg the gorgeous cathedral of St Isaac was completed, and the Neva was spanned by the finest bridge in Europe. He forbade the erection of temporary buildings, and could almost boast that he found his capital of brick and wood and left it of granite. The Winter Palace, destroyed by fire in 1837, rose from its ashes in a few months, more stately than of yore. Nicholas's ideal public edifice was the British Houses of Parliament, for his instincts found a responsive chord in the majesty of the Gothic style. Foreign commerce was assiduously fostered throughout his reign. In 1841 the tariff was codified, and the restrictions imposed on certain classes of imposts were swept away. Four years later the protection adopted by Alexander I was relaxed ; and the final tariff (1850) showed a further advance towards Free Trade. The fruit of this liberal policy was seen in a steady growth of foreign commerce. Its volume during the second quarter of the century was 89 per cent. above the average of the years 1800-25. Dealings in the interior were still hampered by the wretched state of the communications. Nicholas never grasped the full value of railways ; and those constructed by him were intended primarily to serve strategic purposes. A line between St Petersburg and Zarskoi Selo was opened in 1836, and two years later it was extended to Pavlovsk. The two capitals were connected by a railway in 1851. In all 632 miles were in operation at his death ; but no attempt was made to link the Russian and European systems.

His domestic and his European policy were alike hampered by brusque impulses which betrayed a will impatient of control

and more prone to command than to follow the course of events. In Asia he was confronted by conditions which could be mastered only by infinite patience. A glance at the map of his Empire will show that it belongs geographically to Asia, and that an eastern trend is marked out for it by nature. The Ural Mountains and river are conventional boundaries. In the south-east alone an effective barrier was encountered in the Caucasus. But the annexation of Georgia in 1802 gave Russia a footing in the heart of this vast mountain citadel, while that of the European littoral and portions of Armenia increased her stake in the Asiatic continent. In pushing her boundaries towards the Pacific the Tsar showed self-control and steadfast resolve—qualities which alone can bring success in dealing with territories protected from sudden aggression by distance and climate. The fertile tracts in the heart of Asia were the seats of Khanates founded during successive waves of Mussulman conquest. The populations of Bokhara, Khiva, and Kokand retained all the fanaticism of the Prophet's immediate successors and regarded infidels with measureless contempt. Between their oases and the Persian frontier was a desert, the *habitat* of Kirghiz and Turkoman tribes, who subsisted by pillaging caravans and carrying raids far into neighbouring countries.

So far back as 1822 a ukase of Alexander I placed the Kirghiz hordes under the authority of the Governors of Orenburg and Western Siberia. This attempt at annexing territories so ill-defined stirred up intense jealousy in the Khanates. Reprisals followed, and in 1829 a Russian caravan was plundered by Khivans. Friction, too, occurred between the Western Kirghiz and the Cossack colonies, which under established usage were pushed forward to occupy fertile patches in the debateable land eastwards; while other tribes complained of the levy of a poll-tax by Russian officials. Khiva, to which they gave nominal allegiance, occupied the Amu Darya (Oxus) at its embouchure in the Sea of Aral. There the bandits secured support and a market for the spoils of the caravans;



and the Khan held hundreds of Russian subjects in a state of slavery. Perovski, Governor General of Orenburg, endeavoured to overawe the Kirghiz by constructing a chain of forts on his southern frontier, commencing from Alexandrovsk on the Caspian. But the Tsar perceived that isolated posts and flying Cossack expeditions would never give him a secure boundary. Khiva, that focus of unrest, must be subdued. At his orders Perovski fitted out an expedition in 1839; but it started too late in the year, and did not reach the centre of the intervening Ust Urt desert before winter had set in. The loss in men and transport animals overwhelmed in snow was enormous; and Perovski was compelled to retrace his steps. Nothing daunted, he prepared for a second effort in the following year; but Ali Quli Khan, the Khivan ruler, was intimidated by the persistence and might of Russia. He averted ruin by making overtures to Perovski and releasing 400 Russian bondsmen. In 1842 a treaty of peace and amity was made with Khiva. The abortive effort of 1839 had demonstrated the defects of Orenburg as a basis for operation in Central Asia. Greater advantages were offered by the Sea of Aral, which was explored by steamers brought in sections from Sweden in 1844. From this vast lake the Amu Darya and the Sir Darya (Jaxartes) gave a waterway to the heart of the Khanates. The first of these historic rivers came under Russian influence when Khiva tendered submission. A footing was gained on the second by the construction of Fort Kazalinsk on its lower reaches in 1846.

This aggression stirred the susceptibilities of the Khan of Kokand, who claimed the Sir Darya; and his subjects carried their raids far beyond the Russian boundaries. With the view of overawing them, Perovski laid siege to the Kokand stronghold of Ak Mechet, 280 miles inland from the Aral, and after one abortive attempt took it by storm in 1853. In its place rose a fortress bearing his name. Thus both the great highways of Central Asia fell under the control of Russia. Her grip tightened. In 1854 an expedition penetrated the valley of the

Ili, and a fort was built at Verni, between the lakes of Baikal and Issik Kul. At the close of this reign the Great White Tsar was a leading figure in Central Asian politics. To his far-seeing ambitions is due the origin of Russia's sway in the Far-East. By a stroke of genius he selected the young general N. N. Muraviev for the post of Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, and sustained him against the attacks of countless foes. In 1849 Muraviev built the fortress of Petropavlovsk on the eastern shore of Kamskatka, and fortified it so strongly that an attack thereon by the allied squadron during the Crimean War was repulsed with loss. In 1850 he made the Amur a Russian river by establishing the post of Nikolaievsk at its mouth. Ere his retirement in 1860 this great pioneer had laid a solid foundation for an Empire in the East which, in the twentieth century, will revolutionise the Asiatic continent.

While the outposts of Russian civilisation were advanced to the shores of the Pacific in spite of distance, deserts, and Arctic cold, an equal persistence was shown in penetrating the formidable barriers in the South-East. The Caucasus still separated European Russia from the provinces ceded by Persia and Turkey, and rendered them almost valueless. This lofty chain had called a halt in the migration of the human race westwards; and its isolated valleys were held by highland clans who knew no master but the hereditary chief. No tract on the world's surface contains so large a variety of races, religions, and languages. The central tribes, Georgians, Ossetes, Immeritians, and Mingrelians, were nominally Christians, while the northern valleys were held by Muhammadan Cherkesses who gave allegiance to Constantinople, and found a market there for their girls. The Eastern Caucasus was the abode of Lesghians, Chechens, and other fanatical followers of the Prophet, who looked to the Shah of Persia for deliverance. The annexation of Georgia in 1802, followed by that of Immeritia in 1810, had given Russia a base of aggressive action.

The Eastern Caucasus was the prize of two successful wars with Persia, but its inhabitants refused to bow their necks to an infidel yoke. Russia had too strong an interest in maintaining touch with Tiflis, the capital of Georgia, and her new acquisitions in Armenia to leave the intervening tribesmen to their own devices. The Cherkesses were restrained by a ring of fortresses ; and Cossack colonies protected the territory north of the river Kuban from their raids. The cession of the Black Sea ports of Anapa and Sukum Kaleh in 1829 cut them off from intercourse with Turkey. But their time had not come, and they were left for the moment unmolested in their valleys. The case was different with the Lesghians and Chechens of the Eastern Caucasus, who were by treaty Russian subjects ; and an attempt was made by the Governor-General of Tiflis to compel their submission. In 1830 they rose in rebellion at the bidding of Ghazi Mullah, who aimed at uniting the Mussulmans against the Christian intruders. Fixing his headquarters on an almost inaccessible peak at Himri, he traversed the Caucasus, compelling the clansmen to join his standard. Prince Bekovich Cherkasski, sent against him from Tiflis, was defeated with heavy loss ; and, strong in the prestige gained by this victory, the Ghazi attacked the Russian fortresses at Derbend and Tarku. Another attempt to stem the tide of revolt was made in Oct. 1832 by General Rasch, who stormed Himri, and slew its defenders almost to a man. But the Ghazi's lieutenant Shamil escaped to become the hero of a hundred fights for independence. He was as ardent as his master, but in him fanaticism was tempered by deep meditation, and cruelty by an instinct of statecraft.

His reappearance after the wholesale slaughter at Himri was hailed by the Lesghians as a miracle, and the warrior-priest became an inspired prophet. The Russians did not permit Shamil's growing influence to consolidate itself. In 1839 General Grabbe stormed his stronghold, and its garrison gladly met death in order to save their commander. Again

he escaped, and, after running countless risks, appeared in the Russian rear and proclaimed a Holy War. Establishing himself at Dargo, he annihilated a column headed by Grabbe which attempted its capture. General Neidhardt, who succeeded to the command, was not more fortunate. Slow and punctilious after the German fashion, he gave Shamil abundant leisure to display his vast administrative capacity. Daghestan and the adjacent mountains were divided into twenty provinces and placed under as many *naiibs*, who were bound to place 200 horsemen in the field at Shamil's bidding. The male population between the ages of fifteen and fifty were armed and drilled; a postal service and a foundry for cannon were established. Shamil traversed his territory at the head of 1000 horsemen, confirming the faith of his subjects and adding to their number by his eloquence. Alarmed at the progress of the insurrection, the Tsar in 1844 superseded Neidhardt by Voronzov, and, according to his wont, gave him absolute powers to deal with the rebels. The new Viceroy abandoned his predecessor's attempt to overawe the tribesmen by isolated expeditions, which, even when they were successful, had no lasting effect. He surrounded Shamil's mountain lair with military posts united by lines of communication strongly held. The net was gradually narrowed, and in 1845 its objective, Dargo, was taken by storm. Shamil penetrated the Russian scheme, but his efforts to break the ring were vain. With the loss of territory his power declined, and his expeditions degenerated into raids. But it was long ere that mighty spirit was brought to acknowledge defeat. For fourteen years he waged a hopeless struggle, contesting the possession of every peak and valley against the relentless advance of the Russian battalions. For a moment his hopes were raised by the outbreak of the Crimean War, but the Allies neglected an opportunity which will never recur of placing a belt of independent tribes in a position of vast natural strength rearwards of the Russian movement in Asia. Before his reign closed, Nicholas was acknowledged as

the paramount Lord of the Caucasus, and a base was secured for aggression in Armenia and Central Asia.

While Russia was silently laying the foundation of an Empire in the East, the position gained in Europe by so many sacrifices was seriously endangered. The wave of revolution set in motion by the Paris barricades of July 1830 overspread every land and menaced the equilibrium established at Vienna. Its effect was felt even in Great Britain, which usually seemed proof against reckless change. The Liberal Cabinet, in which Lord Palmerston was Foreign Secretary, extended a friendly hand to the constitutional régime established by Louis Philippe. This overt sympathy called for a counterpoise in a league between the military monarchies. When the news of the July Revolution reached Metternich, he hastened to meet his Russian colleague Nesselrode at Carlsbad; and the two statesmen, laying aside old animosities, prepared a scheme of concerted action. Its basis was non-interference in the domestic affairs of France, and the adoption of measures to prevent her from infringing the conditions established at Vienna, or prompting rebellion against legitimacy beyond her borders. This new understanding was tantamount to a renewal of the dormant alliance between the Eastern Powers, for Prussia was too weak to remain in isolation. The Tsar was slow to accept the olive-branch held out by Austria, for he distrusted a state which had shown active jealousy of his Eastern policy and striven to form a coalition against him. It appeared to him consistent with Russia's interests to avoid entangling alliances. But the time had not come for the adoption of a frankly national policy; for Russian diplomacy, as directed by Nesselrode, still clung to the idea that the Empire's welfare was bound up in Europe's, and that it was necessarily a bulwark of the monarchical principle. The Chancellor urged that by withdrawing from the European concert the Tsar would leave Germany to the disintegrating influence of Western liberalism. His course was clearly to guard Russia

against infection from France by a barrier of friendly Powers governed on principles similar to those on which autocracy rested.

Nicholas was prepared for the acceptance of this view by his ingrained respect for the Holy Alliance—the keystone of his foreign policy, as it had been that of his brother's. Though Austria and Prussia had forgotten their obligations, he had kept them steadily in mind; the treaties of 1813-15 and the resolutions of the succeeding Congresses were still in full vigour. But there was obviously no place in a pact between sovereigns ruling by the grace of God for a King of the French who owed his throne to rebellion. England, too, by yielding to an incipient revolution at home and joining hands with liberalism on the Continent, had shown her unwillingness to join an absolutist league. In spite of their timidity, faithlessness, and covert hostility to his Eastern designs, Austria and Prussia were still the Tsar's natural allies in the crusade against liberalism. A reversion to the solidarity established in 1815 was agreed on during interviews between Nicholas and Frederick William III of Prussia at Schwedt and the Emperor Francis at Münchengrätz in 1833. While certain treaties about to expire were renewed, two secret conventions were signed at Münchengrätz. Under the first the general understanding arrived at was extended to the Eastern Question; the second contained mutual guarantees as to the tranquillity of the Polish provinces of the contracting Powers, and provided for the extradition of political offenders. A third convention was at the same time settled in principle, though it was finally executed a few weeks later at Berlin. It was avowedly based on the treaties of 1815, and gave to each signatory the right of summoning the rest to his aid in the event of domestic rebellion or foreign attack. Resistance on the part of any Power to cooperation between the three allies would be deemed an unfriendly act.

Apart from the written obligations undertaken in 1833, the sovereigns arrived at a tacit understanding as to the part which

each should play in the defensive system. To Prussia was assigned the protection of the western frontiers against French aggression, and she was given a preponderating voice in possible discussions as to the future of Holland. Austria undertook to guard the common interests in Southern Europe, and was conceded special claims on Italy, Switzerland, and Spain. The duty of maintaining the German Princes in conservative paths was shared by both the central European Powers. Russia was the pivot and the reserve force of the Triple Alliance. She became the warden of Poland, including Posnanian and Galicia, and of Hungary, and guaranteed the peace of Europe in the Balkan Peninsula from the Pruth to the Bosphorus. The Tsar reserved to himself the right of acting independently of his allies in his Polish dominions and the East. This policy deserves special attention because it serves to explain much that is obscure in the attitude of Russia in international affairs. Its keyword was a maxim which was often on the lips of Nicholas—*Noli me tangere*. He sought not to meddle uninvited in the business of others, but he sternly rejected interference in aught that touched the vital interests of his Empire. It must be admitted that his absolutism revealed itself in a brusqueness of language and action which scorned the trammels of diplomatic tact. Monarchs whom he seemed to treat more as clients than as allies were humiliated by his haughty attitude and by the superiority of the forces under his control. Again and again did Austria and Prussia strive to break the chain, and secretly courted England and France in turn. The Triple Alliance imposed immeasurably greater burdens on Russia than on themselves; it secured them from revolution and attack; yet they felt that these advantages were dearly purchased.

Ere many months had elapsed the astute King of the French sought to repay the Tsar's dislike and contempt by interfering in the eternal Eastern Question. In 1831 Mehemet Ali, an adventurer of genius who had established himself as ruler of Egypt, threw off his nominal allegiance to Turkey

and invaded her Syrian provinces. The victory of Konieh, won on December 21, 1832, by his son Ibrahim Pasha, of Navarino fame, brought the Ottoman Empire to the verge of ruin. In the previous May Nicholas had joined a convention of the great Powers which created Greece a kingdom under Prince Otho of Bavaria, because her weakness precluded her from posing as the heir of Turkey. But the interests of Russia would not permit the growth of any other Power in Eastern Europe which might attract the scattered fragments of the Turkish Empire. Nicholas therefore gave the Sultan material help against his vassal, sending 24,000 men from Moldavia and landing another force on the western shores of the Bosphorus. Austria and Great Britain at the same time joined Russia in pressing the Sultan to make such concessions as would secure peace. The result was the Convention of Kutayeh (May 4, 1833), under which the Sultan ceded Syria and Adana to Mehemet Ali.

The Tsar's reward for his potent intervention was the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi (June 8, 1833), by which Russia promised to defend Turkey against all attacks, and Turkey undertook to close the Dardanelles against the navy of any Power with which Russia might be at war. By this treaty, which made the Black Sea a Russian lake and placed Constantinople at the mercy of the Tsar, Russia came nearer to establishing her long-coveted protectorate over Turkey than she had ever come before. France and England protested, but for the present in vain; although in 1834 Austria induced the Tsar to recall his troops—now no longer required—from the Danubian Principalities, which they had occupied since 1828. It was the Porte itself that, a few years later, gave the Western Powers the chance of recovering a share of the control which had passed to Russia in 1833. The Sultan, burning to recover Syria, attacked Mehemet Ali; but his forces were utterly routed at Nissib (June 24, 1839). A week later, Sultan Mahmud died; and his fleet surrendered shortly



afterwards to Mehemet Ali. Thereupon the Western Powers intervened; the French and British fleets entered the Dardanelles; Nicholas, perceiving that an attempt to maintain sole control would lead to war, gave way; and the five great Powers issued a collective note (July, 1839), placing Turkey under their joint protection.

It was now the Tsar's object to break up this concert, and especially to separate England and France. Nor was this difficult, for while France was anxious to make Mehemet Ali independent of the Sultan, Great Britain was resolved to do nothing to break up the Turkish Empire. With the British government therefore the Tsar came to terms early in 1840, promising to abandon the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi; and when, at a conference in London, the representative of Louis Philippe refused to give way about Egypt, Russia and the other three Powers formed a Quadruple Alliance (July, 1840) for the suppression of Mehemet Ali independently of France. The French people were much irritated by this action, but Louis Philippe steadily refused to go to war with the rest of Europe; and the allied forces speedily reduced Mehemet Ali to reason. France, recognising that she could do nothing alone, now returned to the European concert; and the final treaty was signed (July 13, 1841) by all five Powers. This treaty, known as the Convention of the Straits, deprived Mehemet Ali of Syria, but made the Viceroyalty of Egypt hereditary in his family, while it guaranteed the neutrality of the Dardanelles. Thus for the sole protectorate of Russia, practically established by the Treaty of Unkiar-Skelessi, was substituted a collective guarantee of Turkish independence by the rest of Europe. To recover what he had lost was henceforward the aim of Nicholas; and the germ of the Crimean War may, in a sense, be found in the Convention of the Straits.

Nicholas was slow to forget impressions: and the strained relations between the French and Russian courts led to a mutual recall of ambassadors. His theory that France was a focus of

revolution confirmed him in a wish to unite the other monarchies in a defensive alliance against her. This project demanded an agreement with Great Britain; but public opinion there was steadily against Russia. The old suspicions bred at Tilsit were confirmed by Akerman and Unkiar-Skelessi; and the public was convinced that Russia aimed at the destruction of Turkey in order to profit by her ruin. In spite of this latent antagonism Nicholas clung to the belief that the general interest demanded a thorough understanding between Great Britain and Russia. Another motive for seeking a basis for common action was to be found in the condition of Turkey. In the Tsar's opinion she was sick unto death, and he longed to avert a European war, or at least to safeguard Russian interests, by coming to an understanding with other great Powers, especially with Great Britain. In view of conciliating this country he had not hesitated to relinquish the preponderance gained in Eastern Europe by joining in the conventions which practically decided the fate of Turkey in 1840-1.

The time was propitious for an effort to bring his personal influence to bear on English public opinion. Palmerston's hand was no longer felt, for on the fall of Lord Melbourne the direction of Foreign Affairs passed to Lord Aberdeen, a statesman more remarkable for honesty and good nature than for capacity or determination. Overtures were made in the spring of 1844 for a visit to London, and were accepted with some misgivings by the Queen and her Consort. On June 1 the Tsar of Russia arrived in London and spent nine days in constant intercourse with the royal family, the politicians, and the aristocracy. All classes were charmed by his unaffected geniality, his noble presence and the simplicity of his life and manners. But Nicholas's greatest conquest was that of Queen Victoria's prejudices. In describing her imperial guest to her uncle, King Leopold of the Belgians, her Majesty's womanly instinct divined the strength and the weakness of his character. "He is severe and serious," she wrote, "with strict principles of duty

which nothing on earth can make him change. I do not think him very clever: his mind is not a cultivated one. Politics and war are the only subjects which inspire him with any great interest: he pays no attention to the arts or the more gentle sciences. But he is sincere—I have no doubt of it—very sincere, even in his most despotic actions, being convinced that it is the only possible way to govern. I am sure that he is not aware of the dreadful cases of misery which are so often caused by him; since I saw, from various examples, that he is kept in ignorance of much that is done by his people in most corrupt ways, while he considers himself perfectly just. He occupies himself with general measures, and does not go into details; and I am convinced that there is much which does not and cannot come to his ears.”

The Tsar's only reference to the political situation during his residence at Windsor Castle was an expression of his wish to maintain good relations with England, and not to injure other Powers so long as they remained in constitutional paths. While he spared his hostess discussion on the Eastern Question, it was the subject of the frankest utterances in interviews with her Ministers. “Turkey,” he said, “is falling to pieces. Her days are numbered. Nesselrode denies this, but I am convinced of it. I do not covet an inch of Turkish soil, but I will not allow any other Power to appropriate a single inch..... At present it is impossible to determine what should be done with Turkey in the event of her decease. I will do all in my power to preserve the *status quo*. But we must come to terms on some fair basis, and arrive at a sincere and scrupulous agreement like that already arrived at between Russia and Austria.” Unfortunately for the peace of Europe, the good impression left behind him by Nicholas was destroyed by Russian diplomacy. Soon after his departure Nesselrode sent Lord Aberdeen a memorandum which purported to give the substance of the discussions between his master and the British statesmen. Starting from the premise that the

maintenance of Turkish independence was in the interests of England and Russia, it suggested an attempt to prolong the life of the Ottoman Empire. In case of its demolition the two Powers were to arrive at a preliminary understanding as to the establishment of a new order of things in the East which might preserve the rights guaranteed by treaty and the balance of power in Europe. It is easy to trace in this document a divergence of opinion between the Tsar and his Minister of Foreign Affairs with reference to the imminence of Turkey's ruin. Its vagueness and timidity served to instil suspicion in the minds of public men who had been well-nigh conquered by the charm of Nicholas's conversation. The failure of this honest desire to draw closer to Great Britain should serve as a warning to diplomatists of both countries.

The firstfruits of the Triple Alliance cemented at Münchengrätz were borne in February 1846, when an anti-Austrian agitation convulsed Galicia. Its focus was Krakau, constituted a free city by the Treaty of Vienna. A provisional government was established there which won over the peasantry by dangling the bait of freedom, and the nobles by the promise of participation in the state domains. Thus a servile war was kindled; and the massacres of clergy and nobility were stayed only by the intervention of the three allies. Russian troops were the first to enter Krakau. When order was restored, Nicholas drew his pen through the clause of the Treaty of Vienna which guaranteed its independence. The city had forfeited its rights by becoming a centre of revolution. It was handed over to Austria; and the protests raised by England and France were received in silence. This was the last appearance of the understanding between the Naval Powers which had called into being the Triple Alliance. Deep resentment was caused in England by Louis Philippe's low cunning displayed in an attempt to secure the Iberian peninsula for his family by the "Spanish Marriages." The two Courts drifted apart; and France turned to Austria, suggesting joint action to thwart

Russian designs. Nesselrode was dissatisfied with the aspect of Eastern affairs, for Turkish Christians looked to Russia alone for deliverance. According to his wont he dallied with the proposal. Prussia gravitated towards England, owing to the Protestantism of her new King, Frederick William IV, and his friendship for the English royal family. She was already planning the domination of Germany, which was effected by "blood and iron" in the next generation, and patiently reconciling divergent interests in the Fatherland by means of her customs' union.

The Triple Alliance and the system which it sought to uphold was doomed; but Nicholas, strong in the consciousness of his own loyalty, failed to read the writing on the wall. And yet the revolutionary storm-wind which swept over Europe in 1848 was heralded by unmistakable tokens. In Italy the activity of the Carbonari fomented insurrections against the petty tyrants whose existence prevented the realisation of dreams of unity. The movement was encouraged by Lord Palmerston, whose vigorous hand had since 1846 again controlled the Foreign Office. He exhorted the Italian princes to conciliate the spirit of the age by timely concessions. When Austria armed in order to maintain her hold on Lombardy and Venetia, this apt disciple of George Canning told Metternich that, if his master interfered in the domestic affairs of the peninsula and provoked a general war, England and Austria would not fight on the same side. The Chancellor knew not which way to turn. Fearing England, distrusting France and Prussia, he appealed to Nicholas on the strength of the bonds which united the northern Courts. The response was a loan of 6,000,000 florins from the Tsar's privy purse, which enabled Austria to strengthen her position in northern Italy. In a dispatch addressed by the Tsar to the British Cabinet he announced a determination to maintain the existing political conditions in Italy, and added that if an attack on the Austrian position were made by any foreign Power, Russia's entire forces

would be set in motion for her ally's protection. On the very day which saw the issue of this counterblast a revolution broke out in Paris. Louis Philippe's contemptible domestic policy and his base acquiescence in foreign dictation provoked a popular rising which hurled him from the throne (Feb. 26, 1848). The news reached Nicholas during a ball at the Winter Palace. He strode into the centre of the hall holding a paper, and shouted, "Gentlemen, saddle your horses; France is a Republic!" Equally great was the consternation in London and Berlin. Every action on Russia's part was eagerly canvassed, and statesmen asked what steps she would take to conjure away the common danger.

The flames lit in Paris spread through Europe with amazing rapidity. Berlin rose against its Government; the absolutist Prince of Prussia (afterwards the Emperor William I) fled; and his brother Frederick William IV was compelled by the mob to salute the bodies of those who had fallen in the insurrection. A popular Assembly met and forced the King to grant a Constitution. At Vienna, too, an insurrection took place; and Metternich escaped its vengeance by flight. The half-imbecile Emperor Ferdinand sought refuge with his faithful Tyrolese, and abdicated in favour of his nephew, Francis Joseph. In Italy, King Charles Albert of Sardinia openly espoused the cause of unity and proclaimed the incorporation of Lombardy with his domains. A European war, and perhaps a general cataclysm, were prevented only by the Tsar's determined attitude. Revolutionaries felt that a sword hung over their heads, and their energies were paralysed. Thus the ferment in Germany soon spent its force. Absolutism again raised its head, and withdrew the concessions wrung from it in a moment of panic. Austria was permitted to crush the premature rising in Italy. Charles Albert was defeated at Novara (March 23, 1849) by Field-Marshal Radetsky, and resigned his crown to his son, Victor Emmanuel. While the Tsar's vast and unknown strength intimidated the foreign enemies of the order which he

represented, it was exercised to quell the revolution in countries within his own sphere of influence. When it spread to the Balkan Peninsula, where the Hospodars of Wallachia and Moldavia were dethroned, Russia, with the Sultan's consent, took the offensive. General Lüders led an army across the Pruth, and proclaimed a new constitution at Bucharest. Turkey raised a feeble protest, but she was as clay in the hands of the potter. In April 1849 she signed the Convention of Balta Liman, which gave Russia a voice in the election of the Hospodars, and permitted her to occupy the Principalities in the interests of peace.

The Hungarians now rose to a man against their Austrian masters. The insurrection which broke out in September 1848 was begun by Magyars, but it had the eager support of the Polish malcontents, 10,000 of whom fought in the rebel ranks. Nay, divisions of the Hungarian army were commanded by Generals Bem and Dembinski, who had played a prominent part in 1831. A thrill ran through Russian Poland, Volhynia, and Lithuania; and the Tsar feared that the flames kindled in his neighbour's house would spread to his own. When the Austrian troops were again and again defeated, and Hungary was proclaimed a free state under the presidency of Louis Kossuth, Nicholas answered the young Emperor's appeal by coming to his aid. In June 1849 General Paskievich with 100,000 men debouched on the theatre of hostilities through Galicia, and he speedily turned the scale against the victorious rebels. After a desperate struggle, Görgei, the most brilliant of their leaders, surrendered to the Russians (Aug. 13); and Paskievich was able to inform his master that Hungary was at his feet. The Convention of Vilagos (Aug. 22, 1849) rang down the curtain of revolution in Hungary. Nicholas straightway recalled his troops and restored the vanquished kingdom to Francis Joseph. In a circular addressed to the European Courts he proclaimed that the preservation of Austria's integrity as guaranteed by the Treaty

of Vienna was the sole profit which Russia sought to obtain for her sacrifices and victories. The prestige attaching to vast and unquestioned force made him master of continental Europe. When the National Assembly at Frankfort offered the Crown of Germany to the King of Prussia (March 1849) the Tsar's monition could not be disregarded ; and Frederick William IV declined the offer. In 1850 he again yielded to pressure from his ally and desisted from an attempt to tear the duchies of Schleswig and Holstein from the Danish Crown. At Nicholas's suggestion the integrity of the little northern kingdom was guaranteed by all the great Powers under the Treaty of London (May 8, 1852). At this time his power was at its zenith. The sovereigns of Germany formed a court of obedient vassals, and Central Europe was a solid mass in his hand. His might had overawed Western liberalism and stilled the fierce breath of revolution. The preponderance of Russia acquired in 1815 was regained, and events seemed to justify the pains taken by her ruler to uphold the system created at Vienna. Turkey appeared to be hastening to decay, and no longer offered a semblance of opposition to his will. At home the Autocrat was regarded by seventy millions of subjects as the vicegerent of God in Church and State.

The Russians style the Kremlin Porch, where the old Tsars showed themselves to a prostrate crowd, the "Red Vestibule." Nicholas was adored by his people as the Red Sun, the source of life and joy. In public he was the cynosure of every eye, whether his droshky dashed through the streets on its way to some public institution, or his figure towered above the crowd on the foot-pavements of the capital. At Court, too, the gaze of all centred on him. His tastes were military; never was the army more outwardly imposing or more popular. He loved music, dancing, the drama; all were cultivated with ardour. Even in literature and art no one dared to differ from the canons set up by the imperial will. Liberalism indeed existed, and most liberals are malcontents.



They pointed secretly to the abuses in the army and civil administration which flourished unchecked because the press was muzzled. But even the most enlightened kept peace with his own conscience by reflecting that, with all its defects, the existing form of government was best suited to the Empire. And there were many traits in Nicholas's character which attracted all the best elements of Russian society. His devotion to the Empress Alexandra was touching. Before 1835 she had given birth to seven children; her strength was exhausted, and henceforward she was a hopeless invalid. Her husband watched over her with the tenderest care, and sacrificed his interests and inclinations in order to accompany her to Italy. His family was the stern, lonely man's only joy. In the world he inspired terror by outbursts of passion and the rigour with which he treated himself and others. "We all expect mercy from God," he told a petitioner, "but from me, the ruler of this land, my subjects must only look for justice." When the palace threshold was passed, the harassed lord of 70,000,000 human beings gave place to a father, sharing his children's amusements and delighting that they should have the happy youth which he never knew. Peterhoff, on the shores of the Gulf of Finland, was his favourite retreat. Here he occupied a modest house, using the palace only for transacting business. As his sons grew up, cottages were added for each, where their education was conducted under the father's eye. He loved to wander through the English garden, haunted by nightingales, in the unearthly splendour of a northern twilight, and watch the sun's declining rays as they gilded the domes and spires of St Petersburg. His example, and the favour shown to those whose family life was pure, distinctly raised the ideals of his people. At this tenderest point the hand of fate dealt him repeated blows which undermined his strength. His youngest daughter, the Grand Duchess Alexandra, whose graces made her the apple of his eye, died in 1844, at the very dawn of her married life.

She was followed to the grave in 1849 by the Grand Duke Michael, whose devotion to his brother knew no bounds. The Tsar had remained externally unchanged for fifteen years. He aged rapidly after this bereavement, and the tears came into his eyes when anything reminded him of Michael. He was racked with anxiety on the score of the Empress's health; and the loss of many trusted friends increased his gloom. The imposing edifice rested on insecure foundations.

A crisis was at hand which strained his flagging strength to breaking-point. Clouds scarcely larger than a man's hand arose in the East which to all minds but his own presaged a coming storm. In Lord Stratford de Redcliffe England had a representative in Constantinople whose perspicacity and vigour made him the virtual master of Turkey. Detesting absolutism as sincerely as his master Lord Palmerston, he exerted all his influence to undermine that of Russia. At his bidding the Sultan refused to surrender certain Polish refugees demanded by the Russian ambassador, and his contumacy was supported by the appearance of a British squadron in Besika Bay (Nov. 1849).

Nor was Great Britain the only Power with whom the Tsar had to reckon in a sphere which he deemed peculiarly his own. France, by this time a Republic, under the presidency of Prince Louis Napoleon, showed a disposition to meddle in Eastern affairs. Early in 1851 her ambassador demanded from the Porte the restoration to the Catholic clergy of the great Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, and other sacred spots which had been monopolised by Greek pilgrims. The Tsar's profound religious feeling, his pride as a sovereign Pontiff, were outraged by this claim, which he deemed an infringement of his rights as protector of Turkish Christians secured by the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji in 1774. His ambassador at Constantinople was ordered to champion the rights of orthodox pilgrims, and a firman of 1852 gave them exclusive access to certain Holy Places coveted by France.

That Power protested warmly, and the Sultan was assailed on both sides. The *rationale* of the intermeddling in the East was made clear by the *coup d'état* of Dec. 2, 1851. Napoleon was but following his uncle's example in stifling domestic discontent by a vigorous foreign policy. Though Nicholas was at first inclined to acquiesce in the dictatorship because it bridled the revolutionary spirit, his sentiments changed when the Prince-President grasped at the Imperial Crown. Napoleon's message to the French Senate, which paved the way for the change, was a deliberate attack upon the edifice consummated at Vienna. "France," it ran, "is rebuilding what Europe destroyed in 1815, thus taking a peaceful revenge for the past." On the proclamation of the Empire as the result of a plébiscite (Dec. 2, 1852) the Tsar urged his Austrian and Prussian allies to refuse recognition. He even exhumed a clause in the Treaty of Paris of 1814 which excluded Napoleon's dynasty from the throne of France, and invited England to join a league of the Northern Powers for the maintenance of existing territorial conditions in Europe. Lord Clarendon, who temporarily directed our foreign affairs, declined to accept an alliance which contained the germ of a coalition against France. Nicholas yielded with a bad grace, and vented his dissatisfaction by refusing the upstart Emperor the courtesy due to a crowned head. From that moment Napoleon III determined to work the downfall of a Power which had strangled French ambitions for fifty years.

At this juncture Nicholas's impulsive frankness placed a terrible weapon in the hand of his foe. The domination of a fixed idea is a symptom of decaying intellect. He was firmly convinced that the dissolution of the Turkish Empire was imminent, and he harped upon this theme with a persistence which bordered on monomania. It formed the subject of several confidential discussions with Sir Hamilton Seymour, British Ambassador at St Petersburg, in January and February, 1853. Turkey, Nicholas repeated, was the Sick Man; and a

mutual agreement as to his heritage was essential in the case of the two Powers which had the gravest issues at stake. He proposed as a basis the grant of independence to the Balkan States under Russian protection, and suggested that England might secure her communications with India by occupying Egypt and Candia. "Speaking as a friend and a gentleman," he added, "if England and myself can come to an understanding about this affair I care little what the others may think or do." These proposals were duly reported to the English Government, but were rejected by Lord John Russell. They were not made public till after the outbreak of war. But even while endeavouring to seduce Great Britain, the Tsar had determined on an action which disclosed the scope of his ambition. The paltry ecclesiastical quarrel fell into the background; and the Tsar put forward a demand which, if granted, would have enabled him to rule without a rival in Constantinople.

Dissatisfied with the slow progress of diplomacy at Constantinople, Nicholas sent his favourite, Prince Alexander Menshikov, thither in Feb. 1853 to bring the Sultan to terms. His choice of an intermediary was unfortunate. Menshikov, indeed, united all the qualities of an enlightened Slav. He could master foreign languages and unfamiliar conditions with ease. Though permeated with aristocratic pride he was capable of winning hearts by personal charm, while his sarcasm inspired opponents with terror. A generation earlier these gifts would have ensured success with the Divan, but Nicholas had chosen ill the time for reopening the Eastern question. Under the Treaties of London his individual will had been replaced by a concert of European Powers; and the British ambassador had acquired a position in Constantinople which Menshikov's hectoring and wiles were impotent to destroy. The Tsar ascribed Napoleon's support of the Latin Christians to a desire to create trouble in the East, in view of covering his own designs on Belgium and the Rhine. He

scouted the idea of an Anglo-French alliance, for memories of Waterloo and St Helena were still recent. Menshikov's tone at Constantinople was overbearing in the extreme. Affecting at first an air of mystery, he demanded (April 19) from the Porte a convention securing for his master an absolute protectorate over all members of the Greek Church dwelling within the Turkish Empire. The Sultan was in deep perplexity. To abandon his authority over 12,000,000 subjects was to court perpetual interference on the part of Russia. He sought the advice of the British and French ambassadors. Emboldened by their support he rejected the demand, but at the same time endeavoured to conciliate Russia by framing an ordinance which confirmed all previous concessions to Greek Christians. But the Tsar's pride could not brook the recalcitrance of a former vassal. On April 19 Menshikov presented an ultimatum simply reiterating his former demand. It was rejected; and on May 22 Menshikov left Constantinople. Further negotiations only made clearer the deadlock; and on July 3, 1853 a Russian army under General Lüders entered Moldavia. Europe was informed that its object was to secure material guarantees for the observance of treaties.

These events led to a conference of the Great Powers, which met at Vienna and drew up, on July 28, a Note intended to satisfy the Tsar's interest in the Greek Christians, without forcing humiliating concessions on Turkey. It was accepted by Nicholas, now seriously alarmed by the accord between the Powers, with a proviso that no modifications would be permitted. The Sultan, however, demanded certain amendments intended to make it clear that Russia should have no future right to intervene in Turkey. The Tsar refused to accept these amendments, thereby showing how he intended to interpret the treaty. Henceforward war was inevitable.

The British Cabinet was still unwilling to enter the lists against Russia; and Lord Aberdeen, who presided at the Foreign Office, showed a grievous want of firmness in dealing with the

situation. Had Palmerston been in power the Tsar would have been warned in unmistakable language that England regarded an invasion of Turkish territory as an act of war against herself. Months had been wasted in futile negotiations; and the British Ministry was at length compelled by public opinion to follow the resolute lead of Napoleon. On June 13 an Anglo-French fleet had anchored in Besika Bay, and on Sept. 14 a mixed squadron pushed onwards to the Dardanelles. Thus the alliance which Nicholas deemed impossible became an accomplished fact; and the Western Powers stood forth as protectors of Turkey. Encouraged by their countenance, and pressed forward by his own Council, the Sultan, on Oct. 8, summoned Russia to evacuate the Danubian Principalities within fifteen days. On meeting with a refusal he declared war. Meanwhile the Anglo-French fleet entered the Bosphorus and cast anchor at the Golden Horn.

Nevertheless hostilities did not at once break out; and the four Powers renewed their offer of mediation. But whatever hopes might have still been entertained were shattered by the action of the Russian fleet. On Nov. 30 a Turkish squadron anchored at Sinope, on the northern coast of Asia Minor, was suddenly assailed by an overwhelming naval force under Nakhimov of Sebastopol fame. It was destroyed, with four thousand men; one vessel alone escaping to bear the awful tidings to Constantinople. A roar of indignation ran through Great Britain and France; and the allied fleets entered the Black Sea. The diplomatists assembled at Vienna felt that their mission was hopeless; but, in order to vindicate the European concert, they asked Turkey on what terms she was prepared to treat for peace. In his reply, given on Jan. 13, 1854, the Sultan insisted first on the evacuation of the Principalities, promising, in return, to confirm the privileges of the Christians, to execute the agreement about the Holy Places, and to carry out a large program of administrative reform. These conditions were communicated to the Russian government, but

were rejected on the ground that the evacuation should follow, not precede, the execution of the Turkish promises.

War being inevitable, the Tsar now endeavoured to detach Austria and Prussia from the other Powers. At Berlin and Vienna he had some reason to expect at least moral support. He accordingly despatched Count Orlov (Jan. 1854) with instructions to obtain from the Emperor Francis Joseph a promise of neutrality. But the Austrian government, however conscious of its debt to the Tsar, could not look with indifference on the aggrandisement of Russian influence on the lower Danube. The Emperor therefore asked if the Tsar would evacuate the Principalities and respect the integrity of Turkey. Count Orlov having refused to take such an engagement, Francis Joseph on his part declined to promise neutrality. Nay, he went so far as to mass his troops in Transylvania and to threaten the Russian flank. Similar requests addressed to King Frederick William met with a similar response. Thereupon Count Orlov proposed that the Tsar should treat directly with the Sultan, on the understanding that, if the latter would give sufficient pledges to maintain the privileges of the Greek Christians, Russia should evacuate the Principalities. The Austrian government declined this proposition, which England and France could not have accepted; and the negotiation came to an end (Feb. 2).

Meanwhile Napoleon had made one last effort for peace. On Jan. 29, he sent the Tsar an autograph letter proposing an armistice, the mutual evacuation of Moldavia and the Black Sea, and direct negotiations between the belligerents in view of their arriving at a convention to be submitted to the four great Powers. Nicholas's reply was at least logical. He vehemently protested against the infringement of existing treaties involved in the invasion of the Black Sea without a preliminary declaration of war; and added, "I have made every concession called for in the interests of peace which my honour permits me to make; and when I demand for my co-religionists in Turkey

a confirmation of rights and privileges long since acquired by Russian blood, I ask for nothing that is not theirs by treaty." (Feb. 19, 1854).

We have noted one of the Tsar's dominating ideas—that Turkey was on her death-bed. Another was that under no circumstances would England draw the sword. This perhaps took root in 1851, when the first International Exhibition inspired a general belief that the millennium had dawned. It was confirmed by Lord Aberdeen's vacillation, and, even at the eleventh hour, by a protest against war in the abstract raised by a deputation of English Quakers whom the Tsar received most courteously at St Petersburg on Feb. 19. Disillusion came when the Western Powers presented ultimatums (March 14), requiring the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Principalities before the end of April. Nicholas told a foreign ambassador that he refused to be dragged before a European council of war; and Nesselrode intimated that his master did not consider it suitable to give any reply. In the meantime England rang with preparations for the coming struggle; and the voice of the peace party was hushed in the general enthusiasm. Early in March Admiral Sir Charles Napier sailed for the Baltic with a fleet more formidable in numbers than efficiency. On the 12th of that month Great Britain and France concluded a treaty of alliance with Turkey; and on March 27 and 28, 1854, they declared war with Russia.

Despite their tergiversation, Nicholas still believed that he could reckon on the friendship of Austria and Prussia. The British Foreign Office found means to turn the scale against him by publishing Nesselrode's memorandum on the London negotiations of 1844 and the substance of his master's confidential discussions with Sir Hamilton Seymour. Both the German Powers were profoundly irritated on learning the small account in which they were held by Nicholas. While they declined the invitation of the Allies to enter their league, they bound themselves to common action in disregard of Russian



designs. A protocol was signed between them at Vienna on April 9, which supported the integrity of Turkey as well as the rights of her Christian subjects. Next day, in London, France and England engaged to prosecute the war jointly, neither making peace without the other. Ten days later Austria and Prussia entered into a treaty safeguarding their respective territories, and precluding either party from making peace or war without the other's consent. By a secret clause they resolved to call upon Russia to evacuate the Danubian Principalities, and agreed that the incorporation of the Principalities or the advance of Russia across the Balkans should be a *casus belli*. This conduct moved Nicholas to exclaim that "Austria had astonished the world by her ingratitude." He was himself too loyal to credit the existence of guile in others; forgetting that, with rulers of the modern stamp, self-interest is apt to stifle a sense of favours conferred and the more sacred obligations of treaty.

The Tsar now had the great Powers virtually leagued against him, and he sought to anticipate attack throughout his extended frontier. Large armies were concentrated in Finland, Poland, and Bessarabia: 54,000 men were massed in the Crimea, and 55,000 more were investing Kars in Turkish Armenia. On the European side of the Black Sea hostilities were restricted to the Dobrudja, a fever-haunted tract at the mouth of the Danube. Here the Turks under Omar Pasha showed unexpected vigour; and they were supported by an allied force which landed at Varna on May 29. The Russians invested Silistria; but they were harassed by incessant attacks on their communications, in one of which Field-Marshal Paskievich was wounded. On June 26 they raised the siege. Already, on June 12, in virtue of their previous agreement, Austria and Prussia had called on the Tsar to withdraw his troops from the Danube. In the circumstances, such a demand was irresistible. Accordingly the Russians, after enduring another defeat at Giurgevo, evacuated the Principalities (July 1853), which were subsequently occupied by Austrian troops.

The Western Powers had expected great things from their fleets, but their hopes were doomed to disappointment. Russia is essentially a terrestrial empire; and her ports are well protected by nature and artificial obstacles. French sea-power had not recovered from the ruin inflicted by the Great War; while the British navy had deteriorated during forty years of comparative inaction. Our ships were ill-equipped and worse manned; their commanders were no longer men of the stamp formed by Nelson's spirit and example. The squadrons which entered the Black Sea attempted little beyond a blockade of the Danubian mouths and a futile bombardment of Odessa (April 21). The Baltic fleet's achievements were hardly more brilliant. Napier was intimidated by the stone defences of Cronstadt, and turned his attention to the coast of Finland. A landing was effected on the Aland Isles, and their citadel, Bomarsund, was captured on August 16; but an attempt to destroy Sweaborg, styled the Gibraltar of the North, was unsuccessful. The British cruisers contented themselves with harrying the settlements of peaceable Finnish traders, and destroying the fortified monastery of Soloivets on the White Sea. In the far-East an Anglo-French squadron, which assailed Petropavlovsk on the shores of Kamchatka, was beaten off with heavy loss (August 28). Meanwhile the allied troops suffered severely from malarial fever and cholera. The Principalities having been evacuated, and the Russian fleets driven into port, the primary object of the war was attained; and peace might have been made. But the opportunity of dealing a crushing blow at Russian power in the East was too good to be lost. The allied generals, Lord Raglan and Marshal St Arnaud, cast about them for a weak spot in Russia's armour. For a moment they contemplated an invasion of the Caucasus, where Shamil was still struggling to break through the net. At length they adopted a design which had been communicated to the British War Office in 1819 by two Austrian Grand Dukes.

Sebastopol, the capital of the Crimean peninsula, was a naval arsenal and the head-quarters of Russia's Black Sea fleet. At a council of war held at Varna on July 25, 1854, it was resolved to make this point the objective. On September 3-14 a fleet of 500 vessels of war and transports crossed the Black Sea without molestation, and landed 21,000 English, 29,000 French, and 6000 Turkish troops at Eupatoria, on the western coast of the Crimea. The decision fell as a thunderbolt on Russia. Since 1812 no enemy had profaned her soil; and Sebastopol, secure in its powerful fleet and sea defences, was believed to be impregnable. Now, all was apparently lost. The warships which might have wrought havoc with the Allies' unwieldy armada were sunk to obstruct the entrance to the harbour; and Sebastopol was almost defenceless on the southern side. But Russia had a large army in the field under Prince Menshikov, who was ordered to dispute the Allies' passage of the Alma on their route to Sebastopol. His forces, 46,000 strong, were advantageously posted on heights commanding the river. The invaders, numbering 50,000 under Raglan and St Arnaud, carried the position at the bayonet's point; and the Russians fled in disorder, leaving 5000 killed on the field, and 900 prisoners in their enemy's hands (September 20, 1854).

Sebastopol lay at the victors' mercy, for its landward defences were miserably inadequate; but years of sloth and peculation were atoned for in a few days. In Colonel Todleben Russia possessed the greatest engineer of the century. The destruction of her Black Sea fleet set free 18,000 trained seamen under Admirals Nakhimov, Istomin, and Kornilov. Night and day the whole population of Sebastopol toiled at the trenches; and the stony soil of the Tauric Chersonese soon bristled with redoubts and batteries. The Malakov Tower, set on a lofty hill east of the city, commanded the main defensive positions, which included two Redans, the Central, Mast, and Flagstaff Bastions, with lines of connecting trenches. The Allies, on the other hand, wasted precious days in discussion; and

St Arnaud, supported by General Burgoyne against Lord Raglan, refused his consent to a *coup de main* which would have delivered Sebastopol to the invaders. Thus, when they reached the plateau south of the city after a hazardous flank march, the defensive works constructed in such haste called for a regular siege. A difference of opinion now arose as to the conduct of operations. St Arnaud's sudden death gave the French command to the boorish Marshal Canrobert, who maintained that the key of Sebastopol was the Flagstaff Bastion to the south of the port. General Burgoyne, the British Engineer-in-Chief, urged with a juster intuition that the Malakov Tower should be our main objective; but, unhappily for the besiegers, his view was overruled. The French were assigned the left attack, with a splendid naval base at Kamiesh Bay. The British took up their position on the right, facing the Malakov and Redans, and were content with a remote and incommodious harbour in the land-locked Bay of Balaklava.

Once a decision was arrived at, no time was lost in its execution. Trenches were opened and armed with heavy guns; and on Oct. 17, 1854, they began to pour shot and shell into its defences. The result of the first bombardment was disappointing: for Todleben's improvised earthworks were as invulnerable as the Woolwich butts. After nightfall the besieged repaired the damage of the day. They plucked up courage and assumed the offensive. On Oct. 25, 12,000 Russians under General Lüders attacked the British base at Balaklava and captured some Turkish redoubts which protected it. Charged by the Heavy Cavalry Brigade, they were rolled back in some confusion; and, on re-forming behind their artillery, they cut to pieces a body of Light Cavalry which in a moment of heroic folly delivered a frontal attack. The Russian attempt, however, failed because supports were not forthcoming. On November 5, 1854, the garrison made a more sustained effort to interrupt the siege operations. Reinforced by 100,000 men from the army of the Danube, and animated by the presence of the

young Grand Dukes Michael and Nicholas, Menshikov hurled 40,000 infantry against the British right. Creeping at dawn through the wooded ravines of Inkerman, at the head of Sebastopol harbour, they took the Guards and the Second Division by surprise, and for a few moments it seemed as though the trenches would be enfiladed. But reinforcements hurried up, and after a desperate struggle which lasted for six hours, the scale was turned by the arrival of 6000 Turcos and Chasseurs d'Afrique. The Russians retreated sullenly to the city with a loss of 9000 killed and wounded. From that moment they stood on the defensive, and the ceaseless roar of siege artillery was varied only by the din of an occasional sortie.

Tidings of the Allies' success put a period to the vacillation of Austria and Prussia. On December 2, 1854, a treaty which established a European concert hostile to Russia was signed by representatives of the four great Powers at Vienna. The defence of Sebastopol now assumed a phase unique in the annals of warfare. It was, indeed, far less a siege than a sustained battle between two armies with their communications open. The garrison drew reinforcements from the north by means of a bridge thrown over the harbour: the allies rested securely on their sea bases at Balaklava and Kamiess. Todleben laboured with equal skill and devotion to develop the defence. Regiments vied with each other in constructing works which bore their name. The Transbalkan, Selingsk, Volhynia, and Kamskatka redoubts rose in rapid succession under an appalling fire. Winter set in; and the sufferings of the besiegers on their bare plateau, swept by icy blasts from the north-east, recalled those endured by the French invaders in 1812. Well might the Tsar exclaim when he learnt their plight that Russia possessed two trusty generals—January and February. In the case of the British army inevitable hardships were aggravated by the gross incompetence of the administrative staffs. No attempt had been made to apply the

experience gained in the Napoleonic wars; and the exigencies of party politics had led to a reckless parsimony which starved our Army and Fleet. Fear of responsibility, lack of initiative, speculation, contradictory orders, misplaced etiquette—every factor was in full play which could nullify the value of a fighting machine. So, the finest force which ever left our shores melted away, and was replaced by weedy recruits who died like flies on the snow. But they clung to a desperate position with the bull-dog grip of their race; and the garrison were too profoundly discouraged by previous failures to take advantage of the enemy's distress. For England the Crimean campaign has a pregnant lesson—woe to the nation which neglects the art of war! The Russians suffered as severely from defective communications and malfeasance of every kind. Reinforcements sent southwards from the great military centres perished by thousands on the viscous roads; and a month was occupied in covering the 120 miles between the isthmus of Perekop and Sebastopol. The Russian dead who lay in piles among the Inkerman ravines were scrupulously clean, but they were half starved; their uniforms were thin and ragged. In lieu of a knapsack each carried a canvas bag containing a nauseous black compound which did duty for bread. Not a single article of value was found on their persons—only long tresses of hair and portraits of their women-folk. The siege of Sebastopol was a running ulcer through which the Empire's strength oozed away.

At the dawn of 1855 Nicholas I stood alone in a hostile world. He heard with anguish that Francis Joseph of Austria had congratulated the Allies on their Crimean successes. On January 26 King Victor Emmanuel of Sardinia was led by the prescience of his Minister, Count Cavour, to throw his sword into the balance against Russia. Not a single victory came to justify the Tsar's overweening self-confidence. He received the news of the Alma with incredulity. Convinced at length, that the troops whom he deemed invincible had fled before the

foe, he dismissed the messenger with kind words and went to comfort his anxious wife. On learning that a Turkish army, relieved by the Austrian occupation from the duty of protecting the Danube, had landed at Eupatoria, he ordered Menshikov to attack them. The movement failed on February 17 with heavy loss. The Russian Commander-in-Chief was recalled in disgrace, and superseded by Prince Gorchakov; but the sting of defeat by a despised foe pierced the Tsar's heart and humbled him to the dust. At the outbreak of hostilities his misgivings were excited by the discovery that three regiments encamped near St Petersburg were denuded of common necessaries. As the war dragged on instances of fraud and incompetence multiplied. The machine to which he had given thirty years of labour failed at its first trial, and every component part was proved to be utterly rotten. His lofty spirit was broken by the accumulation of miseries. "Sleep," he told the ambassador of a friendly Power, "has fled from my eyes; I see everything black." On February 8 he was seized by influenza, then prevalent at St Petersburg. But no intermission was allowed in his daily drives and the endless routine of public business; and the Tsar was often seen abroad in bitter weather without the fur-lined overcoat deemed indispensable by all Russians of the better class. On February 21, though too clearly marked by death, he insisted on reviewing a detachment which was starting to garrison Lithuania. His physicians' protest was met with the rejoinder, "You have done your duty, gentlemen; permit me to do mine!" Three days later his iron will was subdued by weakness and pain; and he silently acquiesced in the assumption of the duties of government by the Tsarevich Alexander. From that hour he lay motionless on his narrow camp-bed, covered with a military cloak. The Empress nursed him devotedly, and he still had strength enough to conceal the gravity of his case from her. On February 28 symptoms were perceived of apoplexy and lung-paralysis. Nicholas asked the

physicians if he must die, and on learning that there was no hope he thanked them calmly. A confessor was summoned, and the patient's responses showed that his faith in a future life was strong, and that his enemies were forgiven. Then the Ministers of State were called in. Their dying master thanked them severally and recommended them to his successor, adding an expression of fervent gratitude to the heroes of Sebastopol. At his dictation a message "The Tsar lies at the point of death" was flashed to Moscow and Kiev, the cradles of autocracy. The end came peacefully on Friday, March 2, 1855. Soon after dawn the imperial family gathered round the bed of death, and each received a few words of affection and farewell. To the Empress Alexandra he whispered, "When I first saw you, I said to myself, 'This is the guardian angel of my life.' Be so to these." It is believed that he enjoined the Tsarevich to undertake the liberation of the serfs: and he was heard to say, "I hoped to have left you a well-ordered Empire; but it has pleased God to order otherwise: I can only pray for you and for Russia." Then began the supplications for the dying. Nicholas bore his part in the responses: took his wife's hand and turned on her his glazing eyes. At the stroke of twelve his grasp relaxed, and those who knelt around the bed saw that his weary spirit was at rest.

Nicholas I died as grandly as he had lived, in the firm assurance that he had done his duty. The nations of Europe watched him shining as a pillar of fire amid the clouds of anarchy which beset the dawn of his reign. They stood aghast at his aggressions on Turkey and the relentless severity with which he crushed the Polish and Hungarian rebellions. For a generation he was the sword drawn against revolution. He saved Austria from dismemberment, and checked the premature creation of a democratic German Empire. Diplomats styled him the "Don Quixote of politics"; and his chivalrous spirit had much in common with that of Cervantes' immortal



hero. While he ruled his subjects with a rod of iron, he was ever ready to serve them with an unselfishness which has no parallel in history. But his attempt to stereotype the existing order of things failed because it infringed the law of nature which decrees that all organisms must advance or decay. As the nineteenth century wore on, bringing with it inventions which linked mankind in closer bonds and stimulated the exchange of thought, the Tsar of All the Russias became an anachronism.

Nicholas's conceptions of his duties as a ruler were equally based on illusions. He strove to cut Russia adrift from Europe, to place her in quarantine against the contagion of Western ideals. Here, again, he essayed the impossible. Thought defied his custom's barriers, his censorship, his secret police; and Russia was already too deeply impregnated with foreign influences to take the bias which the autocrat sought to give her energies. But, despite the calamities which it brought on his people, Nicholas's reaction served as a corrective to the cardinal vice of Peter the Great's reforms—their tendency to denationalise. The world saw in him a despot of the most unmitigated type. When the storm of hatred in which he went down to his grave had passed away, his bitterest foes were fain to admit that he had given to all the peoples of his Empire the germs of a sense of brotherhood, a robust faith in Russia, which is the surest guarantee of a splendid and prosperous future. Nor were his subjects slow to recall his many admirable qualities. He was steadfast and true, devoted to the Fatherland, inexorable to himself even more than to others. He despised feudalism and privilege—those quicksands which engulfed the French Monarchy and threaten the existence of others as venerable. When Metternich took exception to the grant of the highest Russian Order to Field Marshal Radetzky, on the score of the veteran's humble origin, Nicholas replied that he valued a man, not for his ancestors but solely for his deserts. In the private relations of life—as a husband,

father and friend, he shone with the serenest light, and conferred undying obligations on the Empire. Before his reign men spoke of an Imperial dynasty; they now allude to the House of Romanov as a "family"; and the domestic joys in which succeeding Tsars have sought relief from the cares of State find a counterpart in millions of Russian homes.

## CHAPTER V.

### AN ERA OF REFORM.

#### ALEXANDER II. 1855-65.

ALEXANDER II mounted the throne under conditions appalling to the most dauntless mind. His armies were struggling against tremendous odds; the smoke of hostile cruisers was seen from the windows of Peterhoff. And he was face to face with a crisis at home far graver than that which his father had encountered a generation earlier. This was no dark palace intrigue, no mere military ferment. He had to reckon with the voice of public opinion, and for the moment it was unmistakeably hostile to the principle which he represented. It is one of the drawbacks of a despotism that the chief of the State serves as a scapegoat in times of public calamity. Russians had endured the perpetual interference of the police, the manœuvres of espionage, and their intellectual isolation, as penalties attaching to their greatness. Nicholas's prestige, due to his victories and the overwhelming force which he was believed to control, had stilled the voice of criticism. When Russia drifted into war, owing to his inability to follow the trend of modern thought, his subjects rose as one man in response to his appeal. At last the dreams indulged in by every Russian bade fair to be realised. They saw the cross again surmounting the dome of Saint Sophia; Jerusalem delivered from the infidels' degrading grasp; the Empire's boundaries pushed far

southwards and embracing those sunny lands which are the Slav's natural heritage. Terrible was the awakening when the truth leaked out despite optimistic bulletins. Men learnt that the efficiency of the machine of aggression on which such lofty hopes had been fixed was sapped by speculation and incapacity, and they reflected with bitterness that the worst abuses had been fostered by the embargo laid on public opinion. The soil of the Empire was sullied by the enemy's tread, his fleets blocked every port. Thus the patriarchal system under which the existing generation had grown up was utterly discredited, and the vials of a people's fury were poured on the dying Autocrat "Awake, O Russia, from thy sleep of ignorance and apathy! Too long have we been kept in serfage by a succession of Tatar Khans. Demand of the despot a reckoning for the national misfortunes. Blinded by passion, thou, O Tsar, hast sought no aim but personal power. Thy life has gone in reviewing troops and signing the legislative projects of charlatans. By thy pride and obstinacy thou hast exhausted Russia, and aroused the world against her. Bow thy haughty forehead in the dust; throw thyself into thy people's arms, there is no other way of salvation." So ran one of the innumerable pamphlets which defied the censor and custom-house official, and invaded the precincts of the palace itself.

The foreign exchanges rose on Nicholas's death, and a revulsion took place in national feeling when the Manifesto of Accession proved that the helm of State was in vigorous hands. Alexander II affirmed his "desire to accomplish, with God's help, the views and designs of our illustrious predecessors, Peter, Catherine, Alexander the well-beloved, and our august father of deathless memory." Come what might, there would be no faltering in the path marked out by Providence for Holy Russia.

The man to whom so many millions looked for succour was in his thirty-eighth year and the maturity of his powers. His father was fully aware of the defects in his own education,

and resolved that the Heir-Apparent should enjoy one fitting him to rule a modern state. But maternal love was apparent in the choice of a tutor. Jukovski was entrusted with the Tsarevich's education; and, though his teaching was deficient in method, he had a heart full of sympathy with others, a poet's brain which teemed with noble thoughts. As befitted the scion of a soldier dynasty, Alexander's training rested on a military basis. He was early taught obedience and discipline, encouraged in Spartan habits, and initiated into all the mysteries of the art of war. But gentler studies were by no means neglected. He acquired the principal languages of Europe, the outlines of their literature and history. French was at first the medium employed, but Nicholas insisted that his heir's education should be framed on strictly national lines. Jurisprudence was taught by the venerable Count Speranski, who instilled into his pupil a measure of his own vague longing for liberal reforms. The Tsarevich's boyhood was spent under his parents' loving eyes, and every Sunday and festival brought a merry gathering of young folk to the Winter Palace. Thus he gained wide sympathy and a knowledge of his own powers. In 1835 his majority was celebrated with all the ceremonies by which the Heir-Apparent dedicates himself to the dynasty and fatherland. On this occasion the stripling won every heart by his chivalrous bearing and by gentle eyes which resembled his mother's. In 1838 he made a progress through the Empire, gaining an insight into its trade and industries; and the following year was spent in visiting the chief European Courts under the guidance of Count Lieven, a veteran for whom diplomacy and etiquette had no secrets. During this tour he contracted a love-match with the Princess Mary of Hesse-Darmstadt, who went to Russia with the Empress, and, after six months devoted to studying the language and customs, became Alexander's wife in 1841. On adopting the Greek religion she took the name of Maria Alexandrovna. After his marriage the Tsarevich was permitted to gain an insight into the mechanism of government,

becoming a Member of the Council of State and the Committee of Ministers. Between 1846 and 1848 he served on six committees appointed to study the question of serfage. The Hungarian rebellion gave him an opportunity of seeing active service; and in 1849 he succeeded his uncle Michael in the command of the Guards, and the supervision of military schools. Few princes had enjoyed so comprehensive a training; and its happy effect was soon perceived in the trend of national history.

The new Tsar's first care was to staunch the wounds through which his Empire's life was ebbing away. While he pushed the defence of Sebastopol with all the resources at his command, the subtler methods of diplomacy were not disregarded.

Austria held the balances with a trembling hand, and yet her attitude was the key to the situation. Fortunately for Russia she possessed in Alexander Gorchakov, her ambassador at Vienna, a statesman gifted with almost magical prescience, who had followed every phase of Metternich's policy. He saw that Austria was drifting into an active alliance with England and France, and that she was unable to play the part frankly of belligerent or mediator. In the last capacity she had forwarded to the Tsar in January 1854 the conditions on which Turkey was prepared to make peace. In the following August she combined with France and Great Britain—Prussia remaining obstinately neutral—to lay down four demands as the basis of any future negotiation for peace. These conditions, famous as the "Four Points," were as follows: (1) Russia was called on to renounce her protectorate over Moldo-Wallachia and Servia, which were to be placed under a joint guarantee of the Powers; (2) the Danube was to be free to the merchantmen of all nations and placed under a European Commission; (3) the integrity of the Turkish Empire was to be guaranteed, with a view to which the naval forces in the Black Sea should be reduced or abolished; and (4) the Tsar was to renounce his

claim to an exclusive patronage of Turkish Christians, while the Sultan's ordinance conferring equal religious rights on all his subjects should receive European sanction. These proposals were communicated to St Petersburg. Their scornful reception led to a treaty with the Allies (Dec 2, 1854) by which Austria bound herself to declare war on Russia unless that Power accepted the Four Points before Jan. 1, 1855. The news of this arrangement brought Gorchakov to his senses. On Jan. 7, 1855, the Four Points were accepted by Russia as a basis of discussion. But Austria, being in possession of the Principalities, had no real intention of going to war; and the alliance of Sardinia with the Western Powers (see above, p. 160), a step evidently fraught with danger to Austria, still further cooled her military ardour. Gorchakov had little difficulty, therefore, in postponing inconvenient discussions. He dissembled his indignation, which was destined to cost Austria dearly, and with great address contrived to tide his country over the period of danger without an absolute rupture with Austria.

It was while matters were thus in suspense that the Tsar Nicholas died. His successor was not unwilling to show at least pacific tendencies. On March 15, 1855, a Conference met at Vienna to discuss the terms of peace, England being represented by Lord John Russell, and France by Drouyn de Lhuys. The first two of the Four Points were accepted without much difficulty. The negotiation broke down on the third. It appeared that Austria, though willing to support diplomatically the proposal to neutralise the Black Sea, would never translate words into deeds. Gorchakov therefore held firm; and the conference came to an end (June 4). It was not the Black Sea, but Austria, that had been neutralised.

This diplomatic success was of inestimable service to Russia, for, in point of fact, the situation in the Crimea was not yet so desperate as to compel submission to all the exigencies of the Allies. After many months of concentrated effort they had not

gained a foot of the Russian defences. It became necessary to redouble their efforts. The command of the French contingent passed from the yielding Canrobert to Field-Marshal Pélissier; and greater activity was shown in the operations by sea and land. Kerch was taken and cruelly sacked; Taganrog was bombarded; the immense magazines accumulated by the Russians in the Sea of Azof were destroyed; and the Isthmus of Perekop became their only means of access to Sebastopol. On June 7, 1855, the Green Mamelon and White Works were stormed by our allies, to whom the main portion of the right attack had been surrendered by Lord Raglan. Eleven days later—on the anniversary of Waterloo—a combined effort was made to grasp the keys of the Russian position. The British assaulted the Redan, while masses of French troops were hurled against the Malakov. Both attacks were repelled with a loss to the Allies of 3000 in killed and wounded. Encouraged by this success, Gorchakov made a final effort to break the net which was closing round the devoted city. On August 16, 1855, he assailed the French and Sardinian positions on the river Chernaya, which protected the right flank of the besiegers' lines. The signal repulse of this attack, with a loss of 8000 men, left him no choice but to await his fate.

The end of the tremendous struggle was now in sight. England put forth her entire strength; mistakes were corrected by experience; and men and material were poured without stint into the trenches. The French excavations extended over fifty miles. Their most advanced parallel was a hundred yards from the Malakov, and the system of mines and countermines was as extensive. During the last twenty-eight days of the siege 1,500,000 projectiles were hurled into the Russian defences. Bomb-proof shelters were battered in. The garrisons were allowed no time to repair damages or replace their shattered guns. Admirals Kornilov, Istomin, and Nakhimov fell gloriously in the foremost fray, and hundreds of obscurer heroes died



daily for their Tsar and country. On September 8, 1855, the thunder suddenly ceased, and the besiegers flung themselves on the Russian defences. The Malakov was carried by the French, who established themselves in its precincts and defied the most desperate efforts to dislodge them. A simultaneous attack on the Redan, delivered by the British troops, was repulsed, and hundreds of brave lives were sacrificed uselessly, for their objective was commanded by the Malakov. Its capture rendered Sebastopol untenable, and the garrison swarmed across the harbour by their bridge of boats, leaving the post which they had defended so nobly a heap of smouldering ruins. Thus fell Sebastopol, after a siege of 336 days, which cost Russia 250,000 lives and an expenditure out of all proportion to her ill-developed resources.

With the capture of Sebastopol a lull came in the main operations of the war. In other quarters the struggle went slowly on. Kinburn and the great naval station of Nikolaieff were taken; and the valley of the Dniepr was opened to invasion. A second expedition was made to the Sea of Azof; but it was found impossible to capture the Isthmus of Perekop, or to drive the Russian forces from the Crimea. But the war was practically at an end. The agony of tension was over, and the belligerents were given leisure to count the cost and gauge the results achieved. English public opinion was divided. A suspicion prevailed that Great Britain had served as a cat's-paw to promote the dynastic ambition of Napoleon III. The national pride was hurt by the preponderance assumed by our allies, and the needless slaughter of the Redan. On the other hand, England was warming to the fray in her usual fashion, and her immense resources began to tell. Lord Palmerston was a strenuous opponent of peace. He thought that Russia had not been sufficiently humbled, and urged the continuance of hostilities on England's peculiar domain. Napoleon III saw France restored to the position which she had lost in 1814, and domestic discord drowned in pæans of victory. He knew

that no further advantage would be gained by continuing the struggle, and that England alone would profit by a naval war. A secret sympathy with revolution, bred of his early connection with the Carbonari, led him to hint at the possibility of fomenting an insurrection in Russian Poland. Lord Palmerston, however, declined his overtures, which excited apprehension in Austria and Prussia. Both Powers had a stake in the ancient kingdom, and feared that the unrest would spread to their own subjects. Their voices were raised at the national conclave in the interests of peace. Gorchakov took advantage of the Allies' divided councils, and urged Austria to hold out the olive-branch.

His diplomacy was aided by a gleam of success in the field which rendered the enemy less exacting. Kars, the key of Turkish Armenia, surrendered to Muraviev after a six months' defence heroically conducted by General Fenwick Williams (Nov. 28, 1855). The Emperor Francis Joseph was emboldened to press an acceptance of the Four Points on Russia, with an implied threat of war. This ultimatum was highly unpalatable to the Tsar, but he was aware that his position was hopeless. Poland was straining at the leash. Finland might well sever the loose ties which linked her with Russia. Sweden, from whom she had been torn, entered into a treaty with the Allies, providing mutual guarantees of their territory (Nov. 24, 1855); and the Grand Duchy's defection would weaken the Empire at its most vulnerable point. Shamil and his stalwart Lesghians plucked up courage. The Turks, who had gained a footing at Anapa, were urging the Cherkesses to revolt. The exchequer was empty, and the paper rouble was refused by banks. Another campaign might dissolve the Empire into the fragments from which it had been welded together in the 16th century. The Tsar therefore yielded to Gorchakov's advice, and signified (Jan. 16) his acceptance of Austrian intervention. On February 1, 1856, the preliminaries of peace were signed, and on the 25th of that month a Congress of the great

Powers assembled at Paris to decide the fate of Eastern Europe. England demurred to the admission of a Prussian delegate, for public opinion was deeply hurt at Frederick William the Fourth's refusal to pass from benevolent neutrality to alliance. Her objection held good, except as regards the confirmation of the Treaty of London (1841), to which Prussia had been a party. Count Orlov and Baron Brunnow represented Russia; and, significantly enough, Sardinia's chief plenipotentiary was Count Cavour. It soon became evident that France and Russia were drawing together; and the resentment of Gorchakov, who had succeeded Nesselrode as Foreign Minister of Russia, was seen in the strained relations between his country and Austria. Orlov dexterously used the undisguised sympathy of France to obtain important modifications of the Allies' demands in respect of Bessarabia and the Danubian Delta. But such was the distrust still felt for Russia that, on the eve of signing the treaty of peace, England, France, and Austria guaranteed the independence of Turkey by a secret engagement. By insisting, even more keenly than the Western Powers, on Russian cessions, Austria incurred the deep and, as it turned out, fatal animosity of her former ally.

Under the Treaty of Paris, March 30, 1856, the Powers bound themselves not to intervene singly in the administration of Turkey, to respect her independence and territorial status, and to treat disputes between any of them and the Porte as matters of general interest. A Hatti-Sharif, or ordinance, had been obtained by England from the Sultan before the Congress opened, which guaranteed equal religious privileges to all his subjects. This was set forth as an article in the treaty. Russia renounced her claims to a protectorate over Turkish Christians. She abandoned similar pretensions with regard to the Danubian principalities, which were in future to be governed by Hospodars elected under European control. She surrendered to Moldavia the southern portion of Bessarabia, which had been ceded under the Treaty of Bucharest, retaining

however the principal trade-routes southwards and the fortress of Kotin. The navigation of the Danube was declared free to all nations, and placed under an European Commission.

A clause, through which Russia drew her pen as soon as an opportunity presented itself, declared the Black Sea neutral and closed it to men-of-war of all nations. Russia surrendered Kars to Turkey, but regained the portion of the Crimea in the Allies' occupation. By a separate act she undertook not to fortify the Aland Isles or to make them a naval station. Thanks to the astuteness of her diplomacy, she scored a decided success against England in securing the insertion of articles which limited the scope of naval warfare. The Treaty of Paris abolished privateering, and provided that a neutral flag should protect the enemy's goods, while neutral property, even under a hostile flag, was exempted from capture. "Contraband of War" was indeed excepted, but no attempt was made to define the meaning of this ambiguous phrase. The recognition of a blockade by neutrals was to be conditional on its effectiveness.

Nations, like individuals, find a sure counsellor in misfortune. The day dawned for Prussia on the morrow of Jena; the foundations of Italian unity were laid in the agony of defeat at Novara. The American war of Secession welded discordant interests into a world-shadowing power. France emerged from the purifying flames of Sedan with chastened pride and a resolve to become worthy of her high destinies. To Russia's foes the Crimean War brought no advantage. Rather was it "the letting out of water," the first of a series of international struggles which have laid on the old world a burden almost past endurance. Russia suffered but a transient pang of wounded pride, and in less than half a century she obliterated every humiliating condition imposed on her at Paris. The moral effect of her discomfiture remained, and it was wholly beneficial. It demonstrated, not only the inherent weakness of ultra-conservative ideals, but the necessity

under which Russia lay of advancing to the level attained by western Europe. The Crimean War is a fresh landmark in Russian history, the forerunner of a peaceful revolution. Life entered that gigantic frame. The people accepted their altered condition with manly resolution, and sought not in vain for guidance. It is to Alexander's eternal credit that he strove to understand them, to elicit their half-articulate utterances. He had confidence in his subjects, summoned to his aid all the best elements in the educated class, and launched the Empire on a path of social and economic reform.

The new policy was clearly outlined in a circular issued by Gorchakov to foreign Cabinets, declaring his master's resolve "to give his first care to the well-being of his own people, and to employ in the development of their resources an activity which would be given to external affairs only when the true interests of Russia demanded its exercise." These words were not spoken in vain. Russia's external relations throughout the reign were in the hands of Prince Gorchakov, a minister of the type demanded by a period of transition. His sympathy with the revolutionary movement of December 1825 placed him in harmony with the modern spirit which aimed at rearranging Europe on a basis outlined by national aspirations. It forbade him to remain in the slough from which Metternich and Nesselrode never emerged. But this statesman had sufficient conservatism to keep him in the beaten path of Russian diplomacy, while his bearing and language, the literary grace of his despatches recalled the best features of a vanished school. His cardinal principles were a dislike of Austria and a leaning towards Prussia. The first responded to the national instinct of his countrymen; the second to the deep family affection of Alexander, who was Frederick William's nephew. This predilection was confirmed by Gorchakov's intimacy with Count von Bismarck-Schönhausen, who represented Prussia at St Petersburg.

The old alliance between the three Eastern Powers was

hopelessly shattered by the Crimean War. In order to avoid complete isolation Alexander approached Napoleon III, who sought to form a league embracing Russia and England to control the movements towards unification in Italy and the Balkan peninsula. In September 1856 the two sovereigns met at Stuttgart, the capital of Würtemberg, which was virtually ruled by Alexander's sister, Queen Olga. This frank exchange of views bade fair to bring about a formal understanding, but at a crucial moment all was lost by an unlucky reference to Polish aspirations which escaped the lips of Napoleon III. Not for the first time did the ruler of France base his relations with Russia less on the true interests of his Empire than on considerations of a dynastic and sentimental character. In 1859 he went to war with Austria in support of Italian unity. Under Gorchakov's influence Napoleon received efficient moral support from the Tsar. The German princes were prevented from joining Austria by a Russian circular which guaranteed them against any possible French aggression. When the Emperor annexed Savoy and Nice as the price of his assistance and thus aroused British susceptibilities, Alexander refused to join a coalition against France in which England, Austria, and Prussia were to have taken part.

He went further, by declaring that he intended arriving at a general understanding with Napoleon III, and carried this resolution into effect in his dealings with the perennial Eastern Question. True to his principle of strengthening Turkish Christians in their resistance to tyranny, he took part in a Conference which met at Paris in August, 1858, and placed the Danubian Principalities under Hospodars elected by representative assemblies with a reservation of Turkish Suzerainty. Alexander was favourable to further developments which occurred in December 1861, when Moldavia and Wallachia were united under the sounding title of Rumania. Thus the traditional descent of their people from Trajan's legionaries was asserted; and the foundations were laid of a

kingdom which offers some guarantee of peace in the Balkan peninsula. Wide-spread disturbances resulted in that region from a war which broke out between Turkey and Montenegro in 1858. The Turks invaded the Montenegrin territory, but were badly beaten by the mountaineers under Prince Mirko. This led to a rising in Herzegovina and elsewhere, which the Turks attempted to suppress with their wonted savagery. The Powers, which had already, at the instance of Napoleon, appointed a commission to delimit the frontier of Montenegro, now intervened, and presented an ultimatum which put a stop to the war. Throughout this episode Alexander II adopted common action with Napoleon III in the interests of Montenegro and of Herzegovina. In regard to the revolutions in Servia (1858) and Greece (1861—1863), and the revolt of Crete (1858)—all resulting from the Crimean War—Russia was not in a position to take a leading part. In 1860 the ferment spread to Syria; and wholesale massacres of Christians took place at Damascus and in the Lebanon. At the invitation of Russia and France a Conference met at Paris in August 1860, which informed the Porte that the great Powers awaited the accomplishment of the promised reforms with impatience; and authorised Napoleon III to restore peace by sending an expedition to Syria. During the autumn of that year negotiations were pursued between the French Emperor and Gorchakov which brought their countries to the verge of a thorough understanding. They agreed that the independence of Turkey was to be preserved as far as possible; but, in the event of her dissolution, the Balkan States were to be federated on ethnological lines with a capital at Constantinople. The cleavage between France and Russia produced by events in Italy prevented the realisation of a project which might have saved much misery and bloodshed. Alexander's legitimist instincts were outraged by the Sardinian invasion of the Papal States, made with Napoleon's tacit approval. The coldness between the two Powers increased when the French permitted the

kingdom of the Two Sicilies to be absorbed by the House of Savoy. Alexander II, however, bowed to the inevitable, recognising the creation of a United Italy under the democratic rule of Victor Emmanuel.

In domestic affairs Russia was destined to pass through a phase of organic reform followed by the inevitable reaction. Alexander's first step was to suspend army-recruitment for three years in order to avoid all needless drain on the Empire's strength. The censorship of the press was relaxed: and its unsparing criticism proved a more effectual check on official vagaries than Nicholas's punishments. Universities were thrown open to all; the restrictions on foreign travel were practically removed. The Third Section, or secret police, whose light-blue uniform had been so dreaded, found its importance gone. This tacit understanding between ruler and subjects did not open the door to faction strife: for the new-born influences which rallied round the throne exhibited only the successive action of divergent schools of thought. On one subject all were agreed. For thirty years poets and novelists had persisted in denouncing that peculiar institution, serfage. "Old Russians" and western philosophers, Slavophiles and liberal democrats, were at one on this issue. When Alexander II was led to attack this gigantic evil by his own experience and a dying father's behests, he was not an autocrat imposing his will on a hostile or indifferent nation. This fact serves to indicate the enormous strides made by Russia since the days of Peter the Great: but the subsequent march of events showed that she had by no means outgrown her leading-strings. The greatest social movement since the French Revolution was consummated without civil strife because it was headed by an enlightened autocrat, ready to revive its flagging energy and to serve as arbiter amid conflicting interests.

In 1856 the serfs of Russia numbered about 47,000,000; of whom 20,000,000 resided on the Crown domains, 4,700,000 on the Appanages reserved for the imperial family; 21,000,000



were settled on private estates; and 1,400,000 were in domestic service. Five-eighths of the population subsisted on land which they did not own. The Crown peasants enjoyed many privileges which were envied by those of private proprietors. They had an organisation well-suited to their simple needs in the Village Commune (*mir*), a primæval form of rural government which survived in parts of Russia for long ages after it had been blotted out by feudalism in the rest of Europe. The Commune became the collective owner of village lands: and was responsible for State taxation as well as the annual quotum of army recruits. This system had yielded excellent results. The Crown villages were, comparatively speaking, clean, well-ordered, and prosperous.

The 21,000,000 serfs on private estates were in less satisfactory plight. They had by prescription a right to enjoy the lands assigned from time immemorial for their maintenance; but they were subject to two forms of bondage. The first was labour dues, *barshchina*, which implied an obligation to work on the lord's private domains. The second, imposed in commutation of labour dues, was a payment termed *obrok*, which oscillated between £1 and £2 per annum, and was from four to eight times as great as the *obrok* paid by Crown peasants in excess of the imperial taxes. The serf was, indeed, protected by law from the extremes of tyranny. Corporal punishment must stop short of death or maiming. A ukase of Paul I limited the tale of labour to three days in the week: and no serf could be compelled to marry a girl of his master's choice. In other respects the lord's control extended over his serf's person and property alike. He might employ corporal chastisement, or force him to be his body-servant. A notable feature in Russian life which has not yet vanished is the swarm of retainers fed by the great nobility. The lord was the sole civil judge on his estate; his consent was necessary to the serf's marriage. He selected the annual tale of recruits, and thus wielded a power dreaded above all others by recalcitrant

vassals. The serf's condition varied with his owner's wealth and character, the locality and customs. Identity of race between master and bondsman checked the growth of some of the worst abuses inherent in negro slavery: and serfage retained some useful survivals of the patriarchal stage. Peasants looked to the noble for protection against the tyranny of others, for loans in time of stress. They enjoyed a prescriptive right to cut timber from his forest, and pasture their cattle in his meadows. But the moral effect of this unique institution was admittedly bad. It outraged human conscience; obliterated responsibility. And though the average Russian has a tender heart, men of the type held up to execration in Mrs Beecher Stowe's masterpiece were occasionally met with. There is nothing so debauching to minds cast in the common mould as absolute power over their fellow-creatures.

The economic effects of serfdom were no better. Enquiries carried out on the eve of emancipation showed that, out of 103,400 serf-owners, only 1,400 possessed more than 1,000 "souls"; 22,000 had between 100 and 1,000; and 80,000 were proprietors of less than 100. Two-thirds of the estates inhabited by serfs were mortgaged up to their full value in credit institutions. But serfdom was not alone to blame for the blight which had fallen on the landed interest. In Russia there is no law of primogeniture. Families are generally numerous; and every child has a right to share equally in ancestral property. To such lengths had subdivision proceeded that thousands of "nobles" were indistinguishable in dress and surroundings from the peasantry. No aristocracy can retain its weight in the commonwealth under such conditions; and the process of disintegration was hastened by the reckless extravagance which took root in Catherine's reign. But the ineffectiveness of forced labour and the custom of feeding hordes of useless retainers were undoubtedly links in the chain of causation. In spite of these inherent defects an obstacle lay on the reformer's path which baffled the liberalism

of Alexander I and his successor's iron will. Russia was still thinly peopled: and, even in the Black Mould region, land was more plentiful than cultivators. The nobles regarded serfs as their main source of wealth; and the value of an estate was computed, not from its area or rent-roll, but from the number of "souls" inhabiting it. Thus an attack on the system seemed likely to compromise the position and future of the nobles. Though a few courtiers had sought to win the Tsar's favour by freeing their bondsmen, the great majority were averse from any change.

A few days after the execution of the Treaty of Paris (1856) Alexander II opened his campaign against serfdom. In reply to a congratulatory address from the Moscow nobility he told their Marshal that the time had come for undertaking emancipation, adding significantly that it was the better course to abolish serfdom from above than wait until it should abolish itself. Finding that his hints fell upon deaf ears, he appointed a Committee on January 14, 1857, to study the best means of ameliorating the peasants' lot. In its debates an obscure State-councillor named N. Miliutin distinguished himself by ardour in the dumb millions' cause. The position which he took up rested on the laws and customs governing the ownership of land. Freeholds, as we understand them, are unknown in Russia; and estates are either ancestral, *votchina*, or granted in return for services, *pomestié*. Those which contained serfs were, for the most part, in the second category; for until the reign of Alexander I the Crown domains were treated as a reserve fund for the aggrandisement of successful generals and imperial favourites. Though in course of centuries the conception of correlative duties attaching to these grants grew weaker, still the soil was never enjoyed in fee-simple. On the other hand peasants had a prescriptive right to cultivate lands assigned to their ancestors for maintenance. Miliutin urged that the grant of personal liberty unaccompanied by land would lead to the rapid growth of a peasant proletariat. These

views had great weight with Alexander II, who also adopted a device suggested by Miliutin for preventing a recrudescence of feudal authority. He ordered that the ownership of peasants' lands should be transferred from private proprietors to village communes (*mir*) created on the model offered by the Crown domains.

At this stage the nobles of Kiev, Volhynia, and Podolia declared their readiness to complete the emancipation begun in 1817 by allotting to their freedmen land in full ownership. Alexander gladly authorised the step under a Rescript of November 20, 1857, and sent a copy to every governor and marshal of the nobility throughout the Empire, with a hint that he expected similar concessions from other proprietors. Favourable replies were received from the nobles of St Petersburg, Orel, and Nijni-Novogorod; and so contagious was their example that the magnates of other provinces asked permission to form committees for studying the details of emancipation.

A question of vital importance now arose. Should the nation at large be invited to declare its will by means of elected representatives? Many of the Tsar's advisers urged him to convene an assembly of delegates from all classes. Some went so far as to express a hope that a constitution might be conceded to the nobility in return for the sacrifice of their feudal rights. Alexander foresaw that an embryo Parliament would be unwieldy in point of numbers, inexperienced in business and disorderly. Moreover, it was certain that a degree of class friction hitherto unknown in Russia would be generated in the debates. The evolution of the terrible Convention from the States-General of 1789 was an object-lesson of the dangers attending a premature attempt to introduce self-government. Between the lord and his serfs there was only one arbiter—the autocrat himself. By a happy inspiration Alexander resolved to test public feeling and gauge local conditions by means of provincial committees, but to retain in his own hands the power of framing a new agrarian

system. Under a Rescript of November, 1857, 46 committees of landowners were formed, representing 110,000 estates inhabited by 21,000,000 serfs. A second, issued in March 1858, defined the principles on which emancipation rested. While the proprietor's rights in the soil were recognised, the peasant was to have the faculty of purchasing his household premises and acquiring an interest in the village lands sufficient to furnish him with subsistence and cover his quatum of taxes. The gross area thus reserved would vest in the commune; and payment of its value to the late proprietor was guaranteed by the State. By way of example, a Rescript of July 1858 liberated the Appanage serfs and conferred full ownership on them without indemnity.

Though the provincial committees soon came to an agreement as to the broad principles of emancipation, opinions differed widely in regard to the partition of peasants' land and the compensation payable to the lord. In the discussions which followed a little knot of enlightened men, including Yuri Samarin, Koshelev, and Prince Cherkasski, created the deepest impression by their eloquence and zeal in the peasants' cause. Every committee presented at least two reports; and the respective factions sent delegates to St Petersburg in support of their views. In receiving them the Tsar declared that he wished to make emancipation a reality. Some sacrifices on the nobles' part were inevitable, but he earnestly desired to reduce them to a minimum. At the same time a "Formulating Commission" was appointed to prepare a general project founded on the provincial reports. Its programme was drawn up by Rostovtsev, who in his youth had rendered great service to the State by his revelations of the conspiracy of 1825.

Finding progress hampered by the passive opposition encountered in many quarters, Alexander II travelled through European Russia encouraging the lukewarm, and appealing to his faithful nobles for support. Under his vast personal influence friction gradually disappeared, and the work of

collation was finished in October 1860. The Code prepared by the Formulating Commission, providing a mechanism for carrying out the measure in all its details, was passed on to a "Chief Committee" presided over by the Tsar's brother, the enlightened Grand Duke Constantine. The names of his fellow-helpers should be held in equal honour by posterity. They were Lanskoï, Valuiev, Bludov, Muraviev, Dolgoruki, Chevkin, and Kniyazevich.

After undergoing scrutiny and amendment from these distinguished men, the Emancipation Code came before the Council of State on January 1861. Alexander II opened the debates by sketching the history of serfdom and the principles of its reform. "In giving personal freedom," he said, "to the peasants, while we recognised the landlord's proprietary rights, we desired to avoid converting the former into a landless and therefore a pernicious class.... We wished to shun the evil precedents set by foreign countries where reforms have almost invariably been accomplished by force. The liberation of the serfs in our Baltic Provinces left them in a piteous plight: and we have succeeded in ameliorating it, after forty years of effort, by carefully defining the relations between landlord and tenant. Such was the case in Poland, too, where Napoleon gave the peasants freedom without determining the respective interests in land. Liberation without land has always ended in an increase of the proprietor's arbitrary power." The Code was pushed through Council with great expedition and promulgated in an imperial manifesto dated March 3, 1861.

This Magna Carta of the Russian peasant abolished serfage throughout the Empire. The freedmen were given a perpetual enjoyment of their homesteads and of an area of village lands equivalent to that reserved by custom for the support of a family; the unit taken being a group of three males, *tiaglo*. This boon was not shared by the domestic servants and retainers, whose emancipation was deferred for two years. As they possessed no land they swelled the ranks of the

urban proletariat. The extent of land assigned for a family's sustenance varied with soil, climate, and density of population. Special rates were laid down for Little Russia, Lithuania, and Poland; and the remaining provinces, covering two-thirds of European Russia, were divided into three parallel zones. The northern belt comprised a land of marsh, lake, and forest with a sub-Arctic climate. Under the Black Mould belt were classed the central provinces, which possess a rich soil but are, comparatively speaking, over-peopled. The Steppes included the southern provinces, which are fertile and well watered but devoid of forests. Each zone was subdivided into Regions, with maximum and minimum areas presumed to suffice for the unit's (*tiaglo*) maintenance. The averages were 19.25 acres in the north, 5.50 in the Black Mould zone, and 27.50 in the Steppes. Striking a mean for the Empire the share allotted to a family was 22.50 acres. The peasants retained individual ownership only in their household premises.

The village lands reserved for their support were vested in a commune, formed by representatives of each family and presided over by a mayor, *starosta*. This body was to meet at intervals and divide the village lands among its constituents, who enjoyed only a usufruct of their allotments without the power of sale or mortgage. No final partition was permitted without the consent of two-thirds of those interested—a provision which has preserved the communes from destruction. These bodies inherited the police and other public functions hitherto laid on landed proprietors; they were collectively liable for the taxes and for the quatum of recruits for the army. For administrative purposes the communes were grouped in cantons (*volost*) comprising ten or more villages inhabited by 2000 adult males. The cantonal president was the *starshina*, elected by assemblies of delegates from each village in the proportion of one man to ten houses. The cantons were given tribunals and municipal institutions of their own. They were guardians of the public interests and heard appeals from the decision of

the communes. Landowners were prohibited from meddling with the new mechanism of self-government.

On these principles the task was undertaken of determining the area to be given up by the proprietor, and the money compensation payable to him by the communes. This delicate operation was entrusted to the parties concerned, and two years were allowed them for framing "Regulation Charters," to record the rights created on each estate. In view of lessening friction, a class of temporary magistrates were called into being, termed "Arbiters of the Peace." These were elected by the proprietors, who were in general secretly opposed to the reform. In most countries the result would have been disastrous, but Russia is so entirely free from caste feeling that the Arbiters took their mission seriously to heart. Though the great majority was drawn from the landowning class, they rose superior to selfish considerations, and indeed were accused of siding with the peasants. There were of course exceptions, but the Arbiters, as a whole, laboured with such zeal that nearly all the "Regulation Charters," numbering 110,000, were prepared within the period assigned by the manifesto.

Communes thus received their fixed proportion of land, and families obtained their homesteads in fee-simple. It remained to fix the price payable to the lord for the transfer, for he surrendered the serf's labour and money dues without compensation. Except in Lithuania, where for political reasons immediate emancipation was conceded, a period of "temporary obligation" was established, and the conditions under which the process was to be completed were left for discussion between the contracting parties. The negotiations might have dragged on indefinitely had not the State declared its willingness to advance the purchase-price to communes calculated on the capitalisation at six per cent. of the rental due on peasants' land. These loans were recoverable with the imperial taxes in instalments termed "Redemption Annuities," which were spread over 49 years and included interest at the same percentage.



This solution of a highly complex problem was satisfactory to both sides. The landowners saw a private debt assumed by the State; the communes obtained immediate enjoyment of their land on easy conditions of payment. But the Empire's finances had not recovered from the strain entailed by wars. It was impossible to advance the huge purchase-money in cash, and the charges of emancipation were met by the issue of two classes of public bonds. The first carried five per cent. interest, payable to "bearer," and easily negotiable on 'change. The second stood at five and a half per cent., but these were "nominative," and transfers were attended by complicated formalities. This class was convertible by annual drawings into bonds of the first category. The entire issue was to be liquidated in 37 years, the term being fixed at a shorter period than the redemption annuities, because it was anticipated that the communes would fall behind in their payments. These enormous operations involved the risk of deranging the Empire's finances and bringing about a commercial crisis. Thanks to the latent resources of Russia and the stimulus given by unfettered labour and competition, they were effected without a serious hitch. At the close of Alexander's reign £7,500,000 had been liquidated by the peasants, and 20,000,000 of them were landed proprietors.

History can show no parallel to the abolition of Serfdom in Russia. Under Baron Stein's influence the Prussian peasantry were freed in 1809, but they were left in the lord's tutelage. Negro emancipation was carried out by England in 1833 during a fit of national hysteria, and left a legacy of injustice and ruin. Miscalculations were inevitable in so stupendous a measure; and the cloven hoof of vested interest was displayed in its final stages. A conservative minority on the chief commission succeeded in curtailing the average allotment and enhancing the valuations. They carried an amendment tending to produce the very evil which Alexander II dreaded. An alternative to the gradual purchase of allotments was offered

in a free gift of one-fourth of the area assigned; and many peasants fell into the trap so cunningly devised, becoming the nucleus of a rural proletariat. These defects assumed an exaggerated importance through the despondency to which all Slavs are liable. Champions of liberation had conjured up a Utopia where prosperity and political freedom were to be the heritage of all, and the seeds of nihilism were undoubtedly laid in the disenchantment which followed. In M. Leroy-Beaulieu's words, the nobility were "half-crazed by the phantom of approaching ruin," and vented their fury on all who had promoted the innovation. Alexander II bowed before the storm. He took the execution of the new law from Miliutin's hands, and relegated him to honourable obscurity as a Senator. His colleagues in the noble work of emancipation were recompensed with neglect or disgrace.

Emancipation has survived the storms and quicksands which beset its earlier career, but the influences brought to bear on Russian society in 1861 have not yet spent their force. In the central provinces, which are blessed with a fertile soil, the landowner draws larger profits than of yore from his diminished estate. Railways have enhanced its value and provided new markets for agricultural produce. Free labour is abundant because population is relatively dense. On the other hand the lake region in the north and the southern steppes suffer from a dearth of hands. The smaller proprietors have abandoned their attempts at farming and flocked into the towns. Moreover the majority of this unhappy class were insolvent before emancipation deprived them of serf labour. So impatient were they to realise the new bonds that the money-market was soon glutted, and the most stringent checks failed to arrest depreciation. Though the landowners of Russia cannot in justice attribute their poverty to emancipation alone, it undoubtedly completed the ruin entailed by their ingrained improvidence. The existing policy of the Government in fostering other industries besides agriculture is based on a

desire to build up a middle class which shall take the place of the decaying landed interest.

Nor has this great reform been an unmixed blessing to the ignorant and suspicious peasant. He was inclined to resent the obligation laid upon him to purchase land which he considered his own by prescriptive right. A rumour found credence that the "Little Father's" behests had been disregarded by his officers; that a second emancipation was at hand which would be attended by a free gift of the soil. During May 1861 many thousands of freedmen rose in Southern Russia at the bidding of Anthony Petrov, who proclaimed himself to be a lineal descendant of Catherine's murdered husband, Peter III. A servile war began, with all its attendant horrors, which were stayed only by military force and the severest examples. Another grievance arose from the fact that forests were, for the most part, left in the landowner's possession. Peasants who had always cut timber and pastured cattle there without let or hindrance, found it hard to adapt themselves to the commercial relations which superseded a patriarchal *régime*. Emancipationists, again, ignored the obvious results arising from the growth of population in races so prolific as the Russian Slavs. In the Black Mould region the insufficiency of the area assigned to the communes is yearly becoming more apparent. Nor did they take account of the increase in fiscal burdens arising from the expansion of the Empire. The capital cost of the railways which unite European Russia with the Pacific and Central Asia was met by foreign loans; but these entail a heavy charge by way of interest, which to a great extent falls on the peasants. The Government would have acted with greater foresight had it accepted a large proportion of the emancipation charges. The mercantile classes, which gained the privilege of acquiring land, would then have borne an equitable share of the national burdens.

The Communal system has not proved the panacea of agrarian ills so loudly proclaimed by its champions. It kills

individual effort, and reduces the mass of cultivators to my level of the least enterprising and provident. It is bey the question that Russian agriculture is on the downward gu the that the farmer's profits are wretched in the extreme. n all obtains only  $11\frac{1}{4}$  bushels per acre under winter whe up a compared with a yield of  $33\frac{1}{2}$  bushels in the United Kir be the The volume of farming-stock is shrinking; manure abtedly sparingly employed. The errors of emancipation Leroy-part responsible for a succession of indifferent phantom during the last decade of the century. Count who had displayed a statesman's instincts when he wrote, ~~before the~~ word of reform will be spoken when the liberation c Russian people reaches the individual. Encourage individua... property and you will stifle Communism; strengthen the family and you will start the nation on a path of progress." Though some of the economic benefits claimed for this great reform are open to question, men of all shades of opinion are agreed as to its moral effect. Russia has been raised in the scale of civilisation by the removal c the stain which had burnt itself into the national conscience, by the sense of personal responsibility which has replaced that of dependence on another's will. Alexander II justified the existence of autocracy by his attitude towards a question of vital importance to his Empire, and he will be remembered as the Liberator-Tsar when the errors and weakness of his declining years have sunk into oblivion. Nor can a meed of praise be refused to the enlightened men who aided him with counsels and personal influence, and to the great body of landowners who showed a degree of self-abnegation and public spirit without a parallel in European history. A people gifted with such noble qualities has a great future in store for it.

A ruler launched upon domestic reforms finds the sphere of his activity constantly extending. It became necessary to bridge the gulf which separated the executive and the commune. The task was undertaken by a Commission

appointed in March 1859 to find means of "giving greater consistency, independence and confidence to the economic administration." Their enquiries furnished materials for a ukase, issued in January 1864, which made a first step in political development on constitutional lines. In every district a popular assembly was created, termed *zemstvo*, made up of delegates elected by communes, municipalities, and land-owners. These bodies, in their turn, sent representatives to a provincial *zemstvo*, presided over by the marshal of nobility. Their powers were at first very extensive. They had the care of roads, hospitals, sanitation, and primary schools. They appointed the lowest grade of Judges of the Peace, reported on the state of the crops, and were held responsible for precautions against famine. The *zems* meet annually in sessions lasting for 15 or 20 days, and appoint a paid committee which remains in office throughout the year.

Thanks to the codification carried out under Nicholas I Russian law was a model of lucidity and arrangement: but its practice left much to be desired. Judges were ill-paid and at the mercy of the executive: their work was conducted with closed doors and in writing. Justice was, therefore, venal and dilatory; the only check being a multiplicity of appeals. In October 1862 Alexander II appointed a Commission with orders to recast the entire system after studying legal procedure in Europe and the United States. The scheme drawn up by them received his sanction in November 1864. Proceedings were thenceforward conducted orally and in public; judges retained office during their good behaviour, and paid advocacy was recognised. For the peasants, special tribunals were provided in every canton (*volost*). The judges, chosen by the cantonal council for a year, decided civil and criminal cases involving claims of £10 and under. Next in order were District Courts, presided over by Judges of the Peace, who were elected by the District Councils for a term of three years. They sat singly to try cases valued at £30 or less; and three

or more constituted a Court of Appeal which went on circuit to cantonal headquarters and heard references from single judges. Above these, again, were Courts of Revision, stationed in provincial capitals, with the Senate at the apex as a Court of Cassation. The reforms of 1864 underwent modification under Alexander III, whose policy tended to transfer the control of justice from zemstvos to the executive. Under the existing law causes involving damages of £50 and less are triable by Judges of the Peace, while others come before the Courts of Circuit. Costs are very light, consisting of small stamp duties and advocate's fees, which follow the event and can never exceed 10 per cent. of the claim. So simple are law and procedure that nine-tenths of the suits are conducted by litigants in person. The system of criminal justice introduced in 1864 was formed on French models. In petty cases there is no hard and fast line between civil wrongs and those which also affect the community: but charges which involve loss of citizenship are tried by the Courts of Circuit with the aid of a jury. The separation of the executive from the judicial arm is complete. Every Superior Court has a "Procurator," or Public Prosecutor, who is in the same position as a private advocate. The merits of Russian law are its cheapness and simplicity. Its defects are a long drawn-out gamut of appeals, and the dependence of judges on the goodwill of the Government, represented by the Minister of Justice, to whom they look for advancement.

The army and the fleet, whose heroism was so unavailing in the Crimean War, did not escape the general ardour for reform. Their reorganisation began in 1862 under General Dimitri Miliutin, Minister of War; but the lessons taught by the Franco-German struggle were taken to heart, and the process was not completed till January 1874. Miliutin's system was based on decentralisation. Much of the power exercised by the War Ministry devolved on a committee formed in each military district. A wish to reconcile efficiency in war-

time with economy in peace called into being a reserve, ready for mobilisation at a few days' notice. The cumbrous Army-Corps with its separate staff was replaced as a unit by the Brigade. All the conditions of military service were revolutionised. In times of serfdom every estate was compelled to furnish its quatum of recruits, who were withdrawn from their families for twenty-five years and rendered unfit for the duties of civil life. Under the new regulations all Russians were declared liable to serve their country for fifteen years. In practice the burden was lightened by exemptions. Youths who annually reached a prescribed age were divided by ballot into two batches, the first of which was drafted into the regular army, while the other joined the reserves. Moreover, the period of active service varied inversely with the degree of education attained by recruits. An ignorant peasant was called upon to serve for six years: a university student was released after six months spent with the colours. Miliutin endeavoured to raise the standard of military education: but he succeeded only in substituting personal ambition as an incentive for the devotion to Tsar and country inculcated by Nicholas I. Officers of the new school were prone to dabble in politics: and the ill-balanced enthusiasm which a few years later plunged Russia into a disastrous war was undoubtedly connected with Miliutin's reforms.

In her efforts to attain sea-power Russia is hampered by a restricted coastline and ice-bound ports. The maritime populations of Finland and the Baltic Provinces furnish a small stock of hardy sailors, but Slavs do not readily adapt themselves to a seafaring life. The Grand Duke Constantine, who directed the Admiralty throughout his brother's reign, set himself the task of training his crews by long voyages in vessels of moderate burden. In 1857 a squadron sailed to the far-East from Cronstadt; and in the following year the world was circumnavigated by six Russian corvettes. In spite of her poverty Russia was compelled to imitate the Naval Powers

in replacing wooden ships by ironclads. In 1861 the first armoured vessel was built for the Admiralty in an English ship-yard. When events in Poland threatened to produce a rupture between the two countries the Grand Duke determined to relieve Russia from dependence on foreigners. A turret-ship, two floating batteries, and ten monitors were at once laid down at Cronstadt and the Baltic ports. Between 1864 and 1867 seven ironclads were constructed in Russia by native workmen. A ukase of 1866 forbade the Admiralty, the War Office, and the Ministry of Communications to place orders for material abroad. Three years later the Baltic fleet included 23 armoured vessels; but, with one exception, they were adapted only to coast defence.

These costly reforms were carried out at a time of severe financial stress. The annual deficits during the Crimean War amounted to £80,000,000: and it left a public debt of £90,300,000. A fillip was given to the national credit by the fact that, throughout the struggle with the Western Powers, no cessation occurred in the payment of Russian coupons in London. But England and France owned or controlled European capital; and a foreign loan was not to be thought of. War expenditure was, therefore, met by trenching on the deposits in State banks and the forced circulation of paper-money, which in 1857 reached £69,000,000. An alarming state of things was disclosed by the budget of that year, which showed assets amounting to £25,800,000, of which £10,000,000 were absorbed in interest on loans, and a deficit of £7,100,000. In order to restore equilibrium the Finance Minister took the desperate measure of reducing the rate of interest and inflating the volume of inconvertible paper. A drain of gold of course set in, which weighed heavily on trade. With the object of establishing a sound system of credit under the Exchequer's guarantee Alexander II founded (June 1860) the Imperial Bank on an English model. Further reforms were introduced in 1862 by M. K. Reutern, Minister of



Finance. The national balance-sheet had hitherto been kept a profound secret, and the absence of efficient book-keeping opened a wide door to speculation. From that year onwards the budgets have been regularly published. Decentralisation was Reutern's watchword. A separate budget was allotted to each Ministry, in which the expenditure was estimated for a year in advance; and departmental heads were strictly forbidden to exceed the allotment placed at their disposal. The resulting economy was soon apparent in the annual budgets. That of 1862 showed a revenue of £34,500,000, outgoings of £37,875,000, and a deficit of £3,375,000. In 1863 the adverse balance was reduced to £1,570,000. 1866 witnessed a set-back, a deficit of nearly £6,000,000 being reported. The paper rouble fell to a discount of 32 per cent.; and a commercial crisis supervened in response to one which shook the London markets. Confidence was restored when the Imperial Bank received authority to issue credit notes; but the revival of Russian credit abroad was due to the State's activity in promoting railway enterprise.

During the reign of Nicholas I the lines constructed were paid for from the public purse and were government property. Alexander II perceived that Russia's economic salvation lay in utilising her latent resources in labour and raw materials, which were but ill developed owing to vast distances and infamous roads. Railways were an absolute necessity; and their construction depended on the introduction of foreign capital. A steady stream set in when concessions were offered with a guarantee of five per cent. on railway stock. The companies formed to exploit this tempting field of investment were subjected to rigid control over finances, construction, and every detail of working. They were given power to acquire land compulsorily, but they soon learnt that where their interests clashed with those of the public the latter were invariably preferred. An option was reserved by the State of purchasing these undertakings after twenty years. Between

1856 and 1870, during the second period of railway construction, the length of road annually laid down averaged 600 miles. Trunk lines connected Russian cities with the western frontier, the Black Sea, and the Baltic. The mercantile marine was by no means neglected. In 1856 a Steam Shipping and Trading Company was formed, with a subsidy and the privilege of acquiring land free of charge for docks and harbours. But railways played an overwhelming part in the industrial revolution which set in after the Crimean War: and Russian credit abroad was raised by the high value reached by the companies' stock. In 1871 the imperial budget showed a surplus of £850,000, which swelled to £1,400,000 in 1874, and to £3,300,000 in the succeeding year.

In his earlier efforts to encourage commerce Alexander kept Free Trade principles in view. The tariffs of 1857 and 1858 were planned on this basis: and the last brought duties on foreign imports down to a mere fraction of those current in the preceding reign. The effect was seen on the volume of foreign trade. Between 1857 and 1868 exports averaged £26,200,000, and imports £25,000,000. The corresponding figures for the ensuing decade were £47,800,000 and £56,200,000; and in 1875 Russia imported goods worth £17,000,000 more than her exports. Government passed in 1877 to the protectionist camp under the influence of that half-exploded fallacy the Balance of Trade. All duties were then made payable in gold, and were thus increased by fifty per cent., the amount of the existing gold premium. Between 1878 and 1883 the tendency to increase customs' imports was sustained. This swing of the pendulum converted an imaginary loss on the balance of trade to an equally illusive profit. Between 1877 and 1880 the average exports stood at £58,400,000, the imports at £54,600,000 only. In spite of unsound economic principles foreign commerce increased throughout the reign: and it is a noteworthy fact that the upward movement dates from emancipation.

Education was brought within the scope of Alexander's reforming zeal by his creation of communal and local councils ; for wise self-government was not to be looked for while the peasantry was steeped in ignorance. In 1864 all primary schools received subsidies from the State. They were placed under the zemstvos ; and an elementary course was prescribed of reading, arithmetic, writing, and Biblical knowledge. In the Baltic Provinces primary schools were, for political reasons, transferred from local bodies to the Russian officials and the orthodox clergy. An effort was made in the same year to regulate Secondary Education, whose sphere was a battleground for the two main currents of thought. The Old-Russian, or Slavophil party held that progress should follow national lines. They conceded the necessity of studying Latin and Greek ; because these languages afford a means of training the intellect and sympathies, and the administrative ideals of ancient Rome were well adapted to the Russian Empire. Liberals, on the other hand, pointed to the ever advancing standard of civilisation in Western Europe and the United States as indicating the superior utility of science and modern languages. The upshot was that secondary schools were ranged in two categories—Real-Gymnasia, which excluded ancient languages ; and Classical schools, which confined their curriculum to that of the English public school of those days. In the previous reign female education was restricted to a few great establishments maintained for the benefit of officers' daughters, where undue attention was given to superficial accomplishments. In 1858 the first High School for girls opened its doors ; and before the close of 1864 ninety-nine were in operation. An attempt was made at the same time to establish normal schools : but here the progress was slow. The newborn zeal of the zemstvos in the cause of primary education was checked by a dearth of teachers.

One of the most far-reaching of Alexander's reforms was the impulse given by him to University training. On the removal of

all restrictions on the number of students at each centre, an influx set in of youths belonging to the poorer classes. Forty years ago education was held to be a panacea for social diseases. Poor students became the fashion in St Petersburg and Moscow society, and many public entertainments were organised in aid of scholarship funds. Such as secured these pittance herded in ill-warmed rooms and subsisted on Spartan fare. No encouragement was given to the manly sports which, according to Herbert Spencer, are outlets given by nature for the superabundant energies attending the organism's growth. Russian Universities were mere teaching and examining bodies, and concerned themselves neither with supervision nor discipline. Now youthful Slavs are prone to aspirations for the good of humanity, and yearn after impossible ideals of brotherhood. The university was a fruitful forcing-ground for the doctrines of socialism, which were gaining ground in Europe. On the relaxation of Nicholas's absurdly rigorous censorship, Russia was deluged with translations of John Stuart Mill and Buckle; and these were meat too strong for men reared under a despotism. Nay, secret printing-presses were set up in the heart of St Petersburg. In 1861 revolutionary prints bearing the suggestive titles *Land and Liberty* and the *Pole Star* passed from hand to hand. But a deeper impression was made by the *Tocsin (Kolokol)* a revolutionary print which appeared weekly in London. Its editor, Alexander Herzen, was driven from Russia in 1848 by the persecution of the censors, who gave him to understand that nothing from his pen would receive their sanction. The *Kolokol* was eagerly read by all classes, and penetrated the Winter Palace itself. Some good was effected by its scathing attacks on official shortcomings. But Herzen and his brother reformers were childishly ignorant of political life and the practical difficulties of government. With all this fervour they never arrived at definite conclusions, but were Slavophiles and cosmopolitan socialists by turns. In 1862 the relaxation of authority

reached a point at which all barriers seemed about to give way. The censorship was rendered nugatory by the mutual jealousy of the departments charged with carrying it out.

The first signal of an approaching storm was given by the professors and students of the Universities. They openly sympathised with Polish treason: and a deputation from Kazan attended the funeral of the peasant incendiary Anthony Petrov. In 1861 Admiral Putiatin, who had distinguished himself in the far-East, was appointed Minister of Public Instruction. As his calling implied, he was a stern disciplinarian, and protested against a system which reared up a brood of revolutionaries at State expense. In October, 1861, the administration of funds raised for scholarships was withdrawn from students, and they were forbidden to hold public meetings. The Tsar's absence in the Crimea tempted the youths of both capitals to enter upon riotous demonstrations in support of their privileges. Troops were called out to disperse the gatherings, and all Universities were closed. But ere many months had elapsed Alexander II was induced to try the effect of conciliation. Count Golovnin, who replaced the stern admiral as Minister, gave back to the students a measure of their lost autonomy. Under a statute of June, 1863, councils were created at each centre, consisting of the professors, headed by a Rector chosen by them for five years. They appointed an inspector to maintain discipline, and three judges who inflicted punishment when called for. These councils appointed the professors, who held office for 25 years, but were subject to confirmation at intervals of four. The respective faculties were given the right of framing curricula of studies.

These concessions restored a semblance of order in the Universities; but the mutinous spirit let loose spread far beyond their narrow sphere. It was, in fact, a reaction against Nicholas's ruthless régime, and was fostered by errors in his son's agrarian policy. The landowners, deprived of their chief

source of wealth, were slow to accommodate themselves to the novel conditions. The peasantry were aggrieved because land which they deemed their own was left in the lord's possession, and complained that his forests and grazing land were unjustly closed to them. In June, 1862, incendiary fires broke out at St Petersburg and Moscow. A state of siege was proclaimed. The courts were superseded by military commissions which made short work of the rioters. A powerful counter-irritant now came into play and called a truce to domestic sedition. The most uncompromising republican felt that his aims must be laid aside while Russia's hereditary foe was in open revolt and all Europe was ranged on his side.

It was in the Polish provinces that the national awakening after the Crimean War excited the most ardent hopes. Patriotism was kept alive there by religion and poetry, which counteracted the effect of the harsh measures adopted by Nicholas in 1831. The national party still dreamt of breaking the chain which bound them to Russia and regaining the provinces which were once under the Polish flag. These aspirations did not escape Alexander's notice. He warned a deputation of Polish nobles, who came to congratulate him on his accession, against indulging in chimeras. He told them that their happiness depended on Poland's remaining, like Finland, bound to the great family composing the Russian Empire. His earlier measures, indeed, showed a desire to give these distracted provinces a share in the benefits which he was planning for his subjects at large. He sent them, in the person of Prince Michael Gorchakov, a Viceroy whose views guaranteed a relaxation of despotic power. At the close of the war he conceded conscription by ballot in lieu of the faculty possessed by Government of seizing refractory youths and drafting them into the army for 16 years. At the coronation, which was celebrated with all the ancient pomp in September, 1856, an amnesty was offered to the surviving exiles of 1831, with the sole condition that readmission to civic rights was contingent

on their good behaviour. These pledges were spurned by the banished Poles, who had formed colonies in the great European capitals. They were divided into two camps, and were unanimous only in looking to the great Powers for help to restore their vanished State. The Reds, who were by far the most numerous section, were also strongest in the cities of Poland. They were ready to draw the sword, and to employ all the weapons of revolution in regaining their liberties. The Whites, or constitutional party, were led by Prince Adam Czartoryski, whose age and high character gave him immense influence in European Courts. Their sheet-anchor was the Constitution of 1815, which, had it been faithfully observed on both sides, would have saved Poland from the worst horrors of civil war. To this shade of thought belonged the nobility, whose political power survived Nicholas's efforts at disintegration.

The noble was the patron of his parish church, and commanded the forces of a religion which was bitterly hostile to Greek orthodoxy. He was mayor of the local municipality; the police and administration of justice were in his hands. His patriarchal influence was still almost boundless. The peasant had secured personal freedom; but a ukase of 1846 which made him owner of his ancestral lands left him liable to personal labour dues. The lord was thus a sovereign in his estate, and he had little to fear from the Russian police-officer, whose authority was restricted to the great towns. All the vitality remaining in Poland was concentrated in the old feudal system, which maintained its prestige in the rural districts. But this privileged class did not escape the contagion of the liberalism which worked a revolution in Russian agrarian economy. Thanks to the energy of the enlightened Count Andrew Zamoiski, a Polish Society of Agriculture was founded in 1855 with a view to ameliorate the peasants' condition. Its scope widened with amazing rapidity; and under a central committee sitting at Warsaw, branches were founded in every district, which busied themselves with improving the breed

of live stock and tillage, and founding schools, hospitals, and orphanages. Though the Society monopolised all the intelligence and hope of Poland, its affairs were so tactfully managed by Zamoiski that some years passed by ere Russian susceptibilities were aroused. In 1860, however, its members sought to anticipate the liberation of Russian serfs by forming a peasant proprietary. They were forbidden by M. Mukhanov, the Russian Director of the Interior in Poland, to take any action except the commutation of labour dues into cash payments. This interference caused profound irritation. National life, checked at its only legitimate outlet, reverted to past memories; and a thrill of wounded pride ran through the country. On February 27, 1861, all Warsaw flocked to the churches, where a Requiem Mass was celebrated for the souls of the victims of 1831. Thirty thousand of the citizens, assembled outside the offices of the Society of Agriculture, submitted in silence to a cavalry charge in which fifteen were killed or wounded. The Viceroy was awe-struck at the demonstration and completely lost his head. He withdrew his soldiers, entrusting the task of keeping order to the students who were known to be the most disaffected class. Gorchakov even accepted for transmission to the Tsar a petition from the nobility demanding the restoration of the National Church, and the system of government and education established in 1815. Alexander's instincts were outraged by his lieutenant's weakness. He repudiated the concessions wrung from Gorchakov, and ordered him to restore tranquillity by armed force.

At this juncture a nobleman stood forward who seemed to be well qualified to act as mediator between his countrymen and their offended ruler. The Marquis Vielepolski had been sent by the rebel government in 1831 as a delegate to Lord Palmerston, but failed to obtain active support from England. He had taken part in the Galician rising against Austria in 1846, and on its suppression his views had undergone a



complete change. He issued an appeal to his countrymen to grasp the extended hand of their brother Slavs, and look to the Tsar for succour against German oppression. When Poland was again seething with revolt, Vielepolski sought an audience of Alexander II, and succeeded in persuading him to adopt a policy of conciliation. Under a ukase of March, 1861, Poland was vouchsafed a distinct ministry for education and ecclesiastical affairs. Elective boards were established in every province and district, with the faculty of representing local needs to a Council of State sitting at Warsaw. The great cities received the right of electing their municipalities. In order to give fair play to the new system, Vielepolski was sent to Warsaw as the first Minister of Public Worship and Education; but, unhappily for Poland, time was not allowed for its operation. Prince Gorchakov again showed his weakness of will by passing at a bound from extreme concession to tactless severity. On April 6, 1861, he suddenly suppressed the Society of Agriculture. His palace was besieged on the morrow by a mob which clamoured for a rescission of the decree. On April 8 the populace assembled in greater numbers with shouts of "Poland for ever!" "A Fatherland! Give us a Fatherland!" When the tension had reached its highest pitch, a postilion driving by happened to sound the National Anthem, "No, Poland shall not die!" An electric thrill ran through the multitude. Its shouting ceased; and with one accord the people fell upon their knees. The movement was misunderstood by the troops who hurried up. They poured a volley of small arms into the kneeling crowd, killing and wounding two hundred men and women.

Alexander's humanity was shocked by this catastrophe. On Gorchakov's death, which occurred on May 30, he sent General K. K. Lambert as Viceroy to Warsaw with orders first to restore order by proclaiming martial law and then to adopt measures for removing the people's grievances. Lambert was not more successful than Gorchakov. He dallied with the spirit of insubordination, allowed the streets to be paraded by

a clamorous mob and the churches to be used for seditious meetings. The 400th anniversary of the union of the "lost provinces" with Poland was celebrated at Lublin, near the Lithuanian frontier, by a procession bearing 48 flags representing the divisions of the ancient kingdom. Then only did Lambert proclaim martial law and supersede the tribunals by military commissions. Two days later, on Oct. 14, 1861, a Requiem Mass in memory of Kosciusko's death filled the churches of Warsaw. They were surrounded by troops who summoned the congregations to disperse. On meeting with a refusal they dragged the worshippers by force into the streets, and marched 3000 to the citadel as prisoners. The churches were closed by the Catholic clergy in protest against their profanation by Russian heretics; and their example was followed by the Protestant and Jewish ministers. Velepolski saw that his attempt at peace-making had failed miserably. He resigned his office; and Gerstenzweig, the Military Governor of Warsaw, blew his brains out on receiving unmeasured reproaches from General Lambert.

Lambert was now recalled, and in his place General Lüders, of Crimean fame, was sent to govern Poland with Sukhozanet, Minister of War, as his lieutenant. They were instructed to act without weakness, to bring rebels before the military courts and execute the sentences passed on them without the smallest delay. With the advent of the new Viceroy an era of repression set in. Political offenders were imprisoned wholesale, and scores of priests were banished the country. But Alexander II still inclined to the views of the liberal section of his subjects whose influence had carried emancipation. This party regarded the Poles as oppressed brethren and believed that they were fighting Russia's battle against despotism. He hearkened to the prayer of that incurable optimist Vielopolski, and made a final effort to deal with Poland by constitutional means. On June 8, 1862, the Grand Duke Constantine, who was recognised as the leader of the liberal party, arrived at

Warsaw as Viceroy. He was accompanied by Vielepolski, charged with the duties of Vice-President of the Council and Director of the Civil Administration. The Grand Duke proved true to his political creed. He promised extensive reforms, and tried to win over the peasants by pledging himself to commute their labour dues to fixed payments. But the Russians made the fatal mistake of embarking on a course of domestic reform without insisting on a due respect for their authority. The people's blood was up, and their leaders were too eager to win the crown of martyrdom to follow the frigid calculations of doctrinaires. On June 27 Lüders was wounded in a public street by an assassin; and within a week the Viceroy's life was twice attempted. On August 7 and 15 Vielepolski was the victim of murderous attacks. The olive-branch extended by Constantine was met by an address presented by the nobility, which stigmatised his programme as insufficient, and demanded a constitution and the union to Poland of all the provinces which belonged to her ethnologically. This insolence was not to be endured. The Viceroy refused to accept the petition, and despatched the nobles' representative, Count Zamoiski, to St Petersburg, whence he was sent across the Russian frontier.

Vielepolski still clung to his delusions, though the moderate party among his own countrymen had broken with him. He placed the Poles in charge of five great departments, reopened the University of Warsaw which had been suppressed in 1832, adopted Polish as the official language, and busied himself with organising district councils. All was in vain. During the latter months of 1862 sedition increased hourly, and it spread to the Russian provinces to the north and south-east which had formed part of the ancient kingdom. The movement was dexterously controlled by a secret committee which met regularly at Warsaw, with ramifications in every rural district and in the public offices manned by Poles. Vielopolski saw too late that his ignorance of practical politics had brought

the country to the brink of rebellion, and he rushed at once to an opposite extreme. In view of anticipating the action of the insurgent leaders he suspended the new system of conscription. On January 15, 1863, the sleeping households of Warsaw were invaded at the dead of night by Russian soldiers, who laid hands on youths suspected of having taken part in political demonstrations and hurried them to the citadel. In the general confusion many of the intended victims escaped to the forests surrounding Warsaw and became a nucleus of insurrectionary bands. A week later the Secret Committee issued a proclamation calling on their countrymen to rise; and on February 17 Mieroslawski was named Dictator of the Polish Republic. On January 22 the whole population took up arms at his summons, and an attack was made on the Russian garrison. It was repelled with ease, for the improvised weapons at the rebels' command were no match for artillery and rifles. The Poles dispersed to reassemble in organised bands, which held the forests surrounding Warsaw. A guerilla struggle set in, attended by all the savagery and irritation engendered by this kind of warfare.

While we render full justice to the bravery and patriotism displayed by this unhappy people, it is impossible to avoid a conclusion that the revolt was a gigantic blunder. The chances of success were less than problematical. The splendid fighting machine which offered so stubborn a resistance in 1831 had perished beyond recall; and the Secret Committee which ruled at Warsaw was unable to dislodge the Russian garrison. No help could be expected from foreign Powers, for the political situation in Europe rendered concerted action between them impossible. Moreover, the insurrection unchained Poland's inveterate foes, the Slavophiles. This party inherited, as we have seen, the traditions of the Old Russians who withstood Peter the Great's reforms. In its modern phase it dates from 1835, the apogee of Nicholas's nationalist régime. A knot of young enthusiasts met at St Petersburg to study the philosophy

of Hegel and Schelling. They soon split into two opposing camps. The first gravitated towards the ideals of Western Europe; the second held that Russia's salvation lay in a return to old national standards and the ecclesiastical traditions of Byzantium. The latter gloried in the name of Slavophiles, and sought to unite scattered members of the great Slav family under a common banner. Their champions were Khomiakov, a poet-visionary; Koshelev, whose practical good sense had wrought great things for Emancipation; and the Aksakovs. The Slavophile voice was stilled for a while by the wave of liberalism which overspread Russia after the Crimean War. When insurrectionary bands appeared in Lithuania, an explosion of the pent-up sentiment took place. Katkov thundered in his *Moscow Gazette* against the doctrinaire weakness which threatened a disruption of Holy Russia. Public feeling was thoroughly roused, and a reaction set in which carried with it the Tsar himself.

In May 1863 Alexander sent a notorious Slavophile named M. N. Muraviev to govern the Lithuanian provinces with ample discretionary power. Muraviev's programme embraced the Russification of the revolted provinces. Catholic priests were to be deprived, monasteries secularised. He proposed to fill all public offices with Russians, to confiscate the property of rebels, and colonise the escheated estates by Russian peasants. He even recommended that the entire population of Lithuania should be transplanted. This ferocious measure was vetoed by Alexander, but he approved of all the others. On arriving at Vilna, Muraviev told the Lithuanians that he had come to restore the historic character of White Russia. He was as good as his word. The rebel bands were hemmed in by a cordon of troops, and hindered from concerted action. Towns which showed sympathy with them were given up to fire and pillage. Every measure of repression—domiliary visits, deportation to Siberia, salvos of grape-shot, and the gallows—seemed good in Muraviev's eyes. A servile war

was provoked by his manifesto authorising peasants to take possession of their lords' estates; and the people of every village were held responsible in purse and person for damage caused by rebels within their boundaries. This relentless severity enabled Muraviev to report, on October 25, 1863, that order was restored in the revolted provinces. He was hailed by the *Moscow Gazette* as the saviour of orthodoxy in north-western Russia, and his methods found many imitators. They were employed with equal success by Dlotovski in Livonia and by Annenkov in the Ukraine and south-western provinces.

Poland resisted unification with greater subtlety. On October 6, 1862, General Miliutin, Minister of War, confessed that the authority of government did not extend beyond its headquarters and those of the army-corps in the field. The first collisions took place at Blonié and at Sierock on the Prussian frontier; but on February 8, 1863, Count von Bismarck, who had become Minister of Foreign Affairs, concluded a convention with Russia which paralysed the rebels' activity in that direction. Prussian troops were echeloned on the border, to guard it from infraction by the rebels; and the Polish subjects of King William were warned that sympathy with the national cause would entail all the penalties of high treason. Thus were laid the foundations of the Russo-Prussian alliance which smoothed Bismarck's path in 1866 and 1870, and was an important factor in the evolution of the German Empire. The field of hostilities was thus contracted; and on Feb. 25, 1863, the Dictator Mieroslavski was forced to seek refuge in Austrian Galicia. He was succeeded a week later by Langievicz, who mustered 3000 men at Gocza. These ill-armed levies were surrounded by converging columns, and after three days' fighting were hurled across the Galician frontier (March 19). With this defeat organised resistance in the field came to an end, but the rebellion assumed a more insidious phase. The Secret Committee resolved itself into a National Government, and the complicity of the entire population enabled it to defy

the Russian police and traitors to the national cause. Its operations were directed by a council of five, whose personality was unknown to their agents. Their behests were conveyed to the heads of the six departments by a Secretary of State. Four newspapers were published under his supervision; and the Russians were never able to discover the presses from which they were disseminated throughout the country. This extraordinary government was more punctually obeyed than the Russian Viceroy supported by 87,000 troops. In April 1863 the Tsar proclaimed an amnesty to all who would return to their obedience. The Polish Council forbade compliance; and not one rebel laid down his arms. Large contributions were called for; the precise amount was paid into the rebel treasury without demur. An effectual interdict was laid on public worship, and at a word from the Committee the Warsaw theatres played only to Russian auditors. More effectual measures were taken when Count Berg, whose firmness was well known, arrived on the scene of action to strengthen the Viceroy's hands. In June 1863 a Revolutionary Tribunal was established, whose proscriptions were ruthlessly carried out by armed agents. Its first victim was Viclepolski's secretary, who was condemned to death as a traitor; and within a fortnight his fate was shared by eight other officials of the Russian government. In no instance was the assassin brought to justice.

Slavophil opinion was excited to frenzy by the evident weakness of the Grand Duke Constantine, whose failures were contrasted by Katkov with the brilliant results obtained by Muraviev in Lithuania. The tension was increased by a half-hearted attempt at intervention on the part of England and France. Public opinion in both countries resented Prussian subservience to Alexander; and Napoleon III urged the cabinets of London and Vienna to join him in a note protesting against the sinister alliance. England hesitated, deeming it illogical to attack the accomplice while the principal escaped. Our ambassador at St Petersburg was, however, instructed to impress the Tsar with the wisdom of granting

an armistice and restoring the institutions guaranteed to Poland by the treaties of 1815. Gorchakov's reply was couched in a conciliatory tone. He pointed out that the rising was the handiwork of Polish exiles and of the separatist party who aimed at destroying the edifice constructed at Vienna. They had misused the liberty granted by Alexander I, and had left Nicholas I no choice but to abrogate the constitution. The present Tsar's policy was the outcome of a wish to give Poland the autonomy and free institutions which would in due course be extended to Russia. The Foreign Minister's rejoinder to Napoleon's protest was more uncompromising. Russia, he said, declined to recognise the existence of any obligation to render an account to France.

On April 5, 1863, simultaneous notes on the Polish question were presented by the Western Powers and Austria. England took her stand on the Treaty of Vienna, which united Poland with Russia under specific conditions, unfulfilled by the latter. Poland could not be legitimately treated as a conquered country. Principles of abstract justice apart, it was hoped that an end would be made of a state of things which menaced the peace of Europe. The French and Austrian notes referred merely to the sentimental aspect of the situation; but this interference in her domestic affairs was rendered peculiarly unpalatable to Russia by the simultaneous receipt of protests from the Latin and Scandinavian Powers and even from Turkey. Gorchakov met them by reminding Europe that the obligations imposed in 1815 were reciprocal. It was the duty of every nation to repress action within its territory which tended to encourage Polish rebellion. On June 17 England and France returned to the charge. They proposed the grant of an amnesty, the restoration of privileges conceded in 1815, freedom of commerce, the appointment of Poles to public offices, and remedies for other grievances. It was urged that a European Conference would be an appropriate tribunal for deciding the fate of Poland. The Russian Chancellor had by this time gauged the situation.



He knew that the rebel bands were at the end of their resources, and that there was no reason to fear armed intervention. His reply was a peremptory rejection of the proposed conference, and an assertion of the Tsar's right to be master in his own house. Mutual jealousies reduced Europe to silence in the face of this rebuff; and Napoleon III contented himself with declaring publicly that "the treaties of 1815 had been trodden under foot at Warsaw." The mischief wrought by this Platonic sympathy was soon apparent. On July 25 Vielepolski was dismissed, and a month later the Grand Duke Constantine resigned office in favour of Count Berg, who was given dictatorial powers. The new Viceroy created a special police-force of 60 officers and 3000 men, selected for their intelligence, who were quartered on the 30 parishes of Warsaw with orders to keep him informed daily of occurrences in every house. The energy of the National Government redoubled. On September 19, 1863, the Viceroy was fired upon from Count Zamoiski's house, which was gutted and burned by the troops. Early in November an attempt was made on the life of General Trepov, a distinguished police-officer of St Petersburg, who had been despatched to assist in organising the new force at Warsaw. On this occasion the would-be assassin was arrested and executed. His fate was the death-blow of the insurrection, and the more ardent spirits secretly quitted Poland. Vainly did the National Government strive to regain its vanishing prestige. In October 1863 it appointed Romuald Traugut Dictator, in view of seconding the negotiations carried on between the "white" exiles and foreign cabinets. His hands were strengthened for a brief space by the energy of General Hauke Bossack, who raised the standard of revolt in Radom; but in February 1864 he fought the last engagement in the field. The rebel government's authority was now clearly at an end; and an attempt to gather in the sinews of war met with no response. On March 18 Traugut was arrested by the ubiquitous Trepov; and on August 5 he laid hands on the five members of council, who were given a short shrift.

Hardly were the last embers of revolt extinguished than Alexander II adopted the Slavophil programme in its entirety. An instrument ready to his hand was found in N. Miliutin, who publicly recanted his democratic opinions. Liberalism, he said, had been tried on the banks of the Vistula without success. Poland had no need of political rights or autonomy which she had failed to assimilate. She required an economic revolution which should change the face of the land and regenerate the people. He sought inspiration at Vilna from Muraviev, who promised to march hand in hand with the convert, for the good of Russia; and returned to St Petersburg with a project for destroying Catholic and aristocratic Poland, and raising up an "oppressed race" as a pillar of the Russian throne. It received Alexander's sanction; and the contriver was sent to Warsaw as Imperial Commissioner with Prince Cherkasski, his colleague in Russian emancipation. Miliutin's policy was based on that great measure. A ukase of March, 1864, gave Polish peasants the fee-simple of the lands which they had cultivated as tenants-at-will. The indemnity payable to the legal owners was made a charge on the revenues of Poland. In order to maintain friction between discordant interests, an undefined right of access to the noble's forest-land and pastures was granted to the peasant. Another ukase introduced the system of village communes (*gmina*), which was shielded from interference on the part of the nobles and priests. Thus the power of an irreconcilable aristocracy was shattered beyond repair. Catholicism was vigorously attacked. Three-fourths of the monasteries were suppressed, and their lands were confiscated. The Church was deprived of its revenues; and salaries payable by Government were assigned to parish priests. Another ukase directed that escheated property should be put up to auction, and restricted the right of purchasing it to Russians. Miliutin's zeal for unification grew with the apparent success attending it. He quitted Warsaw in 1864, leaving Prince Cherkasski to carry out his policy at the head of a Russian Commission, and settled at St Petersburg in order to

watch over its execution. In 1866 the labours of that body came to a close. Poland was divided into 10 governments, embracing 85 districts, and placed under the Minister of the Interior. But the process of Russification was continued with ever-increasing vigour. In 1869-70 the Russian language was prescribed for official correspondence and the lectures of university professors: and the use of Polish was forbidden in Lithuanian churches, schools, newspapers, over shop doors, and even in conversation. More effectual measures were taken to destroy the influence of Catholicism. In 1874, 350,000 conversions to Greek orthodoxy were reported from the Lithuanian provinces. Two years later the Russian judicial system was introduced in all its details. This policy stabbed Poland to the heart in her social institutions, her language, and her creed. Its keynote was struck by Muraviev when he told the Lithuanians that if they did not become Russian in thought and instinct, they would be strangers in a land which they would in the end be forced to abandon. The fusion was completed in 1874 by the abolition of the Viceroyalty on Count Berg's decease.

The later history of this unhappy land offers one proof more that material advantage is a more powerful lever in effecting assimilation than edicts worthy of Draco himself. Protection, which has stunted so many branches of Russian trade, has proved an unmixed blessing to Poland. The removal of customs' barriers gave her alert and enterprising people access to 125,000,000 consumers. Feudalism soon succumbed to the modern industrial spirit. Warsaw has quadrupled its population in forty years; and the growth of other trade centres can be paralleled only in the United States and Australia. The national character shows the impress of the silent revolution. It is more practical and positive than of yore; and there is a decrease in the tendency to indulge in generous illusions. Poles under Russia's sway witness the sufferings endured by their comrades in Posnania and Galicia. They are well aware that their only choice lies between the Russian and the German yoke: and they prefer the former.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SECOND REACTION.

ALEXANDER II (CONTINUED). 1865-1881.

THE consequences of the Polish rebellion of 1863 were speedily felt by the Empire at large. Liberalism was still in a fluid state. Vague, confused, and vacillating, it was unable to make headway against the positive conceptions of the Slavophiles, who triumphed with Muraviev. They held that Russia had nothing to borrow from the West, with its survivals from feudalism, and its effete conceptions of property and politics. Katkov, the fiery editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, was the man of the new era, just as Herzen, N. Miliutin, and Valuiev had been pioneers in the path of constitutional reform. The other newspapers gained an unexpected degree of freedom by following his lead. Alexander II had tentatively introduced the French system of warnings, suspension, and suppression; but the muzzle was applied only to journals tainted with revolutionary ideas. Katkov and his minions were allowed to attack ministers of the Crown who were suspected of liberal tendencies. The revulsion of public feeling affected Alexander himself. His instincts were shown in the reply vouchsafed to addresses presented by the nobility of Tver and Tula, praying for the convocation of a national assembly. He told them that "the right of initiative in all matters of reform is indissolubly

connected with the autocratic power entrusted to me by God."

The reaction was precipitated by an attempt to assassinate the Tsar, made on April 16, 1866, by a noble named Dimitri Karakozov. It was at first believed that the culprit was of Polish birth; but Alexander remarked that the worst feature in the crime was that it was the work of a Russian. This was in fact the first occasion on which a man of the people had raised his hand against the "little Father." A cry of horror ran through Russia, and the throne was besieged by assurances of sympathy and devotion. But irreparable mischief had been wrought. Muraviev was ordered to examine Karakozov and follow the plot in all its ramifications. His work was done with his usual thoroughness. On June 6, 1867, a Pole named Berezovski fired a pistol at the Tsar, who was visiting the International Exhibition at Paris. This second attack was a mortal blow for liberalism. Suvarov, who was one of its leading lights, was dismissed from the Governorship of St Petersburg. Count Golovnin, who had done so much for scientific training, resigned the Portfolio of Public Instruction to D. Tolstoy, an ultra-conservative. Two years later Valuiev was supplanted by the dilettante Timashev as Minister of the Interior. The conception of unity in creed and institutions received a mighty stimulus from the appearance of Samarin's work, *The Frontiers of Russia*, which goaded the Government into a crusade against the form of civilisation current in the Baltic Provinces. In July 1867 Russian was substituted for German as the official language of Livonia, Esthonia, and Kurland. Peasants were given the ownership of the lands which they had occupied as tenants. In 1876 the office of Governor-General of those provinces was abolished; and in 1878 the Hanseatic constitution of their cities was replaced by municipalities on the Russian model.

Encouraged by their success in deciding the fate of Poland, the Slavophiles turned their attention to the Grand Duchy of

Finland, whose constitutional privileges excited intense jealousy. Their attacks were foiled by the Tsar's regard for the pledges given at the commencement of his reign. He imposed silence on the *Moscow Gazette*, and stood forth as the champion of Finnish liberties. The rather anomalous position created in 1809 had, on the whole, been respected by Nicholas I. The Diet was not convoked during his reign; and in more than one instance he enacted laws for the Grand Duchy without consulting its Estates. In 1835, however, he abandoned an intention of acting autocratically in a matter of judicial reform, on learning that the Diet's consent was required by a fundamental law of 1734. Alexander II gave Finland a distinctive coinage in 1860, though it appears that he lived to regret this recognition of autonomy. In 1863 he was induced by the loud complaints of the Finnish Senate and people to convoke the Diet at Helsingfors after an interregnum of fifty-four years. His opening address, pronounced on September 18, referred to the "principles of constitutional monarchy involved in the character of the Finnish race, of which every law and institution bears the impress." Reserving to himself a right to initiate changes in the fundamental laws, he announced an intention of placing before the succeeding Diet a Bill for removing obscurities in the ancient enactments and repealing such of their provisions as were inconsistent with the status established in 1809. In December 1864 Alexander appointed a Committee to study the codification of Finland's fundamental laws. His instructions specified the Form of Government of 1772, which Gustavus III of Sweden imposed on a subjugated oligarchy, and the Act of Security and Union (1789), which reasserted the rights of the Crown but conceded to the people certain agrarian rights hitherto monopolised by the nobility. These were to be welded into a new form of government, with a scrupulous regard for the wording and spirit of the fundamental laws. The measure contemplated was tantamount to a constitution, but, unfortunately for Finnish

aspirations, it was not pursued. The second branch of the Committee's enquiries embraced a new Code of Procedure for the Diet, which passed into an organic Law in 1867, and was declared "inviolable for the Sovereign and States of Finland until it be modified or abrogated by the universal desire." It ordained that the Diet should assemble every fifth year, and rendered the consent of the four Estates essential to any change in the fundamental laws.

The people of Finland hailed these concessions with heartfelt joy, and a national spirit awoke in the general enthusiasm. It was fostered by the poetry of Runeberg and Elias Lönnrot, who sang the glories of a mythical past. Hitherto Swedish had been the only vehicle of culture. The Finnish tongue, which resembles no European speech save Magyar, was assiduously studied. Under her mighty neighbour's aegis Finland's material progress was sustained throughout the reign; and her people took rank among the foremost European communities. Unhappily a separatist tendency was not slow in appearing. The Finlanders, justly proud of their conquest of difficulties, which would have kept a less vital race in the fishing and hunting stage of development, were not always alive to their obligations or the necessity of respecting Russian public feeling. The new spirit was apparent in the discussions on military reform which took place in the Diet of 1867. Under Swedish rule the army was respectable in point of numbers, but it slowly melted away, and its sole survival was a Guard-battalion. General D. Miliutin urged the extension of his comprehensive military reforms to the Grand Duchy. With Alexander's consent a Bill was laid before the Diet, which assimilated the conditions of service in Russia and Finland, and placed the Finnish army under the Minister of War. The Finnish Commission charged with working out details took up a strictly national standpoint; and, in spite of Miliutin's protest, their conclusions received the Grand Duke's approval. The Military Service Law of December 1878

defined the functions of the army as the defence of the throne and the fatherland. It recognised the principle of universal liability to serve, but restricted appointments in the civil and combatant branches to Finlanders. The army was fixed at a strength of 5,000: its proportion to the adult male population being .15 per cent. as compared with 1.6 in the case of the Russian Empire. The maximum period of service with the colours was three years only; while uneducated Russians cast for active service must spend six years in the first line. Military command was vested in the Governor-General, under the Russian Minister of War, but executive control remained in the hands of the Finnish Senate. The essential clauses were given the force of a fundamental law; the result being the creation of a purely national army, which was not liable to serve beyond the limits of the Grand Duchy.

While Alexander II was regarded by his Finnish subjects as the restorer of their liberties, he permitted reactionary ideals the fullest scope in his Russian dominions. The tentative scheme of self-government which seemed destined to pave the way for a constitution was delivered over to a bureaucracy which longed to destroy it. The new Jury system was deprived of its most essential features; judges were again placed at the mercy of the Executive. Timashev purposely crippled the zemstvos' resources and placed every obstacle in their path. Rural magnates who had thrown themselves into the scheme of local self-government retired in despair; and the boards were reduced to impotence. But reaction was given the fullest scope in the realm of public instruction. Slavophiles attributed the crimes of Karakozov and Berezovski to the malign influence of technical training, which tended to foster materialism and anarchy. As a corrective, Tolstoy proposed to place instruction on a classical basis. The times were not propitious for the re-enactment of Nicholas's restriction on the number of students; but the Minister took an oblique method which was no less effectual.



In 1871 he prescribed a course of study in Gymnasia teaching Greek and Latin; and instituted examinations with a view to discourage a candidate rather than to test his knowledge. The Courts of Discipline ruled with an iron rod; and every year the expulsions largely outnumbered admissions in every university.

A Government which adopts retrogressive standards must calculate on the evolution of forces threatening its very existence. The anarchical doctrines of Nihilism first took shape in the reign of Alexander II. Like most ideas current in Russia it came to her from the West. Nihilism germinated in the brain of the French philosophers of the eighteenth century; and, passing through the alembic of German thought, it was dimly foreshadowed in the teachings of Hegel, Schelling, and Ludwig Büchner. When the new doctrines reached the universities of Russia they found more congenial soil than was afforded by the Fatherland, whose political progress lags far behind that attained by art and industry. The impulsive Slav nature, prone to yearnings for the good of mankind, chafed under domestic tyranny; and vague speculation became in time a positive creed. Nihilism passed through three well-marked phases. The first was rather a mannerism than a cult. It was a revolt against the efforts made by Government to fetter thought, and had no concern with politics. The next step in the evolution was brought about by Bakunin's teaching. In 1864 Bakunin escaped from Siberian exile and settled in London, where he joined the staff of Herzen's organ. Under his influence the *Kolokol* began to preach a sharply defined and highly militant creed, whose canons had a stern logic of their own and appealed forcibly to the perfervid intellect of youthful Slavs. According to Bakunin, the happiness of mankind demands a volcanic upheaval which must destroy every existing institution. Government, law, property, and privilege must be swept from the face of the earth; for, if a single atom of the old order of

things survive, it will become the germ of a counter-revolution. These wild theories took a more definite form at a Congress of Nihilists held at Basel in 1869, when Bakunin proposed the construction of an International State of Workers on foundations cleared of effete matter. At this stage Herzen seceded from the movement, and retired to Nice to die.

The founder discovered an eloquent mouthpiece of his subversive teachings in Chernishevski, who founded in the Empire itself a secret society styled "Young Russia" in touch with the Nihilistic coteries of London and Geneva. In July 1862 he was arrested for circulating a seditious pamphlet among the peasantry and sentenced to fourteen years' banishment in Siberia. While awaiting trial in the Citadel of St Petersburg he wrote a novel, *What are we to do?* which exhibits the doctrines of Nihilism in their action on modern society. This book was eagerly read by Russian students, as was his *Political Economy*, which combats the bourgeois prejudices of John Stuart Mill. Chernishevski carried the movement a step further than his master. He grafted socialism on the hatred of existing institutions preached by Bakunin. In the Russian commune he found the germ of a new society in which labour was to be organised, and wealth to be equitably divided. Thus was consummated the second phase of Nihilistic development. It had been an abstract philosophy: it became a party-cry. Emerging from the realm of speculation it entered that of practical politics.

The transient success of the Paris Commune in 1871 gave a mighty impetus to this extraordinary dogma. It grew more militant and pushed its propaganda to extremes, but was as yet unsullied by plotting and murder. The final stage in Nihilism came with the depression bred of the Russo-Turkish War (1877-8), when an embryo political party narrowed into a clique of desperate conspirators whose weapons were dynamite and the knife, and whose watchword was terror. The headquarters of Nihilism was the Military School of Medicine at

St Petersburg, which was a soil well adapted to the growth of materialistic tenets. Hence it spread to the Universities and High Schools. The girl students were among its most ardent disciples. They lived in absolute chastity with the young men, displaying a degree of fanaticism and disregard of self which was unsuspected in Russia and unknown in the rest of the civilised world. As this propaganda grew in intensity, so did the watchfulness of the Russian Government. In January 1870 a socialist conspiracy among the St Petersburg students was unearthed. The informer was assassinated, and his murderer escaped detection. Under Nicholas I the annual tale of exiles to Siberia was 8,000; it now ranged between 16,000 and 20,000.

But Bakunin and his followers were not content with the assimilation of their ideas by schoolboys and students. They knew that the bent which they sought to give Russian energies might be effective enough in early youth, but that it rarely survived experience of life and its stern realities. Disciples were urged to win over the dense phalanxes of ignorance and misery around them. Then was seen the strange phenomenon of young men and maidens abandoning their homes and studies to "go among the People"—so ran the catch-word. They entered the peasant's fetid hut and strove to lighten his sorrow with words of hope. The apostles of this sombre gospel of negation were fain to admit that their enthusiasm made no impression on the dense brains which they sought to enlighten. No anarchistic teaching could uproot the inherited devotion for the Tsar and the sense of gratitude inspired by serf-liberation; but in the modified form which represents the third stage of Nihilistic evolution, it has obtained a certain measure of success beyond the student cliques. Socialism is no novelty, for the resurrection of the rural commune has familiarised the peasant with all its essential tenets. The ingrained cunning bred of 250 years of serfdom led him to suspect his benefactor's motives, and to scheme for further

concessions. Class friction, hitherto unheard of in Russia, was generated by the closure of the nobles' pasture and woodland, which took place when a patriarchal regime was superseded by one based on purely commercial principles. The inveterate tendency of mankind to view the past in a roseate light led millions of peasants to regret the good old days of serfdom. So late as 1876 upwards of 2,000,000 peasants stood out against manumission, preferring to render their money and labour dues as of yore. Only 640,000 out of 5,300,000 peasant proprietors had acquired their lands without recourse to State assistance. Emancipation has not proved a panacea for agrarian ills; and a proletariat which is never far removed from famine's grip is prone to hearken to the socialist's allurements.

We have seen that the friendship which sprang up between Russia and France after the Crimean War was destroyed by Napoleon the Third's encouragement of Polish dreams. The conduct of Prussia on the other hand served to cement the ties of blood which united her royal House with the Romanovs. In his gratitude for effectual help against his rebellious subjects Alexander II made overtures for an alliance. Bismarck was averse from any formal pact, which he believed would destroy the tottering equilibrium of Europe by placing Russia on the long arm of the lever; but the sympathy between the two Powers continued almost to the close of Alexander's reign. It bore fruit in 1863, when the death of Frederick VII of Denmark led to a chain of events which enabled Bismarck to enlarge the Prussian frontiers, exclude Austria from the German Confederation, and ultimately grasp the hegemony of Germany. Prince Christian of Glücksburg mounted the throne of Denmark by virtue of the Treaty of London (1852), which settled the succession in his branch. The question of the Elbe Duchies—Schleswig and Holstein—which had already produced a war between Prussia and Denmark in 1848, now again became acute. The Government of Frederick VII had drawn up a constitution making Schleswig an integral part of Den-

mark, and imposing taxation on Holstein, which was subject to the Danish crown but was also a member of the German Confederation. One of Christian's first acts, after ascending the throne, was to confirm this constitution. The German Diet protested, and espoused the cause of Prince Frederick of Augustenburg, whose father had renounced his claim to the Duchies after the treaty of 1852. A federal army, to which Prussia astutely sent no contingent, invaded Holstein on the plea that the Constitution was an infringement of German rights. But the pretender's claims, and those of the Confederation itself, were brusquely set aside by Austria and Prussia, who sent an ultimatum to Denmark demanding the instant withdrawal of the Constitution. Their armies were mobilised in support of this position. Gorchakov gave strong moral support to the allies. He told the British ambassador that Russian sympathies were enlisted on their side, and that armed resistance on the part of Denmark would free them from the obligations imposed by the Treaty of London. At the same time his representative at Berlin was instructed to declare that Russian interests in the Baltic were opposed to a dismemberment of Denmark, but to make it equally clear that this statement was intended to paralyse the interference of England. Thus Austria and Prussia were assured of Russia's friendship; and they knew that the other guarantors of Denmark's integrity would resign themselves to neutrality. In January, 1864, an allied army of overwhelming strength poured into Holstein. Both Duchies were overrun, after a struggle protracted for six months by the desperate valour of the Danes; and when the Treaty of Vienna (October 30, 1864) placed Schleswig and Holstein at the allies' disposal, Gorchakov made no sign. Nor did the other parties to the Treaty of London raise an effectual protest against an act of lawless aggression.

Ere many months elapsed the conquerors began to quarrel over their booty; and Prussia's demeanour left no alternative but war. She compelled the Austrians to evacuate Holstein;

and finding a majority of the German Confederation in league with her rival, she dissolved that body (June 14, 1866). As this step was an infringement of the Vienna Treaties, Gorchakov invited the neutral Powers to meet in conference for the decision of a dispute in which all were concerned. These overtures being coldly received, he held his hand. Russia's position as a great Power was vindicated; and his only guiding principle was her national interests. The Southern German States sided with Austria in the war which began on June 18, and was brought to a close by the Treaty of Prague (August 23, 1866). The speedy triumph of Prussia left Alexander II no part to play but that of moderator; and his diplomacy aimed at preserving the German dynasties allied with his own from the results of their miscalculation. Bismarck gracefully waived the right of conquest in the case of Würtemberg and part of Hesse Darmstadt: but he annexed Hanover, Schleswig-Holstein, Electoral Hesse, Nassau, and the Free City of Frankfort. Prussia emerged from the struggle with Austria as the recognised mistress of Central Europe and the head of a new North German Confederation which arose in August 1866 on the ruins of the edifice erected in 1815.

Bismarck was not slow to perceive that German unity must remain a dream while every step taken by him was watched by jealous rivals on the other side of the Rhine. His designs called for the destruction of the existing government in France. Napoleon III, without possessing a tithe of his uncle's genius, was every whit as eager to aggrandise his Empire by meddling in the affairs of other States. The Prussian Chancellor secured him as a tacit accomplice in the struggle with Austria by pandering to this ruling passion. In 1867 Napoleon schemed to purchase the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg from the King of the Netherlands. Now it had belonged to the defunct German Confederation, and Bismarck's protest against its cession to France was endorsed by a conference of the great Powers which assembled in London (May 11). This disappointment rankled in

the breasts of the French people : and it yearly became more evident that the tension between the two countries could have no other issue but war. In July 1870 a match was laid to the train by the candidature of a Hohenzollern for the vacant throne of Spain. An outburst of fury was excited in Paris by the prospect of Prussia reigning vicariously on the south of the Pyrenees. Hostilities were postponed by the personal mediation of Alexander II, at whose suggestion King William of Prussia induced the candidate to withdraw his claim. But wisdom and self-restraint were cast aside in the outcry against Prussian arrogance which arose in Paris. Goaded to action by its voice, Napoleon III demanded guarantees against a repetition of the attempt to foist a Prussian ruler on Spain. Further negotiations were precluded by his tone, and not less by the unscrupulous manœuvres of Bismarck. On July 15, 1870, Napoleon declared war on Prussia with the hearty concurrence of large majorities in both Chambers.

Alexander's strong family instincts rendered him partial to the Prussian cause. While he joined Great Britain in offering mediation on the basis of the treaty of 1856, he prevented a concentration of Austrian troops in Bohemia by threatening to adopt an armed neutrality. Francis-Joseph's example of quiescence was followed by Italy, despite her obligations to France, while the South German States joined their forces with Prussia. Napoleon III was left to his fate. His political instincts were at fault ; and his armies were hopelessly outmatched in numbers, organisation, and generalship. At the end of October 1870 the French armies in the field had been destroyed or captured ; the Empire had given place to a Republican Government of Defence ; and Paris was closely invested. The speedy collapse of the greatest military monarchy of the West wrecked the principle of solidarity formulated at Vienna. Thenceforward there was no pretence of thought for the welfare of Europe : and every State framed its foreign policy with a sole regard for its individual interests. The first step in the new departure

was taken by Gorchakov, who considered the crisis an opportune one for repudiating certain provisions of the Treaty of Paris (1856) which had always been most galling to Russia. These clauses forbade her to construct naval arsenals on the coast of the Black Sea and closed it to all war-vessels. In a circular of November 12, 1870, he informed the signatory Powers that his master was unable to admit the validity, as against himself, of a treaty which had been violated by others in nearly every article. Though the Tsar had no wish to reopen the Eastern Question, he had deemed it right and a duty on his part to notify the Porte that the Supplementary Convention of 1856 which limited the action of littoral Powers had lost its force. Enthusiasm was excited throughout Russia by this questionable stroke of policy. Corporations, provincial assemblies, and local boards united in assuring the Tsar of their resolve to support it with their treasure and blood. The eclipse of France as a great Power rendered circumspection on the part of others necessary: and Gorchakov hastened to assure Great Britain that he shared her anxiety to maintain the Ottoman Empire intact. Bismarck requited past favours by putting forward the transparent device of a European conference to discuss Gorchakov's note. His proposal was unwillingly acquiesced in by Great Britain; and delegates from each Power which had been a party to the Treaty of Paris met in London in January 1871. The result was a foregone conclusion. On March 13 a Treaty was executed by all the Powers, which expunged the clauses of 1856 limiting the naval rights of Russia in the Black Sea, but affirmed the Sultan's right to close the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus to war-ships. In other points the Treaty of Paris was upheld. Five days later a Convention was signed by Russia and Turkey, which declared that each Power had regained the right of maintaining fleets of any dimensions in the Black Sea.

On January 18, 1871, King William of Prussia was



proclaimed German Emperor at Versailles, receiving warm congratulations from his nephew Alexander II, whose benevolent neutrality had contributed so largely to the realisation of Bismarck's far-reaching projects. But an informal understanding with Russia was not sufficient in the eyes of the all-powerful Chancellor. His brand-new empire required the support of the military monarchies during the perilous stage of consolidation. He drew near to Austria; and despite the hostility which still rankled at Vienna, that capital was a meeting-place of the two Emperors in 1871. The basis of an alliance between Austria-Hungary and Germany was laid, and Alexander II was invited to join the league. He felt that Austrian ingratitude had been sufficiently punished, and his growing tendency to absolutism inclined him to an alliance with other Powers which governed by the sword. In September 1872 the three Emperors, attended by their foreign Ministers, met at Vienna. The discussions were shrouded in secrecy, but they ended in the formation of a Triple Alliance. In the following May both the German Emperors returned Alexander's visit, and the brilliant festivities which welcomed them showed Europe that a close intimacy united the military Powers. For sixteen years the Triple Alliance was a main factor in European politics. In England this displacement of the balance of power was viewed with suspicion; nor did relations between the two countries improve on the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh with Alexander's only daughter, the Grand Duchess Maria (January 1874). In the ensuing May the Tsar paid a visit to the bride in London. He was coldly received by the public, who had not forgotten the repudiation of the Black Sea clauses: and Conservative politicians resented his refusal to receive Mr Disraeli, against whom Alexander had conceived a prejudice.

It was neither modesty nor distrust of her own power that led Russia to follow Bismarck's triumphal car: for the goodwill of Prussia and Austria-Hungary's impotence gave her a

free hand on the line of her natural expansion. In the near-East, indeed, Russia was still unable to act singly. She joined England and France in recognising Prince William of Denmark as George, King of the Hellenes (1863), and the surrender of our Protectorate of the Ionian Islands (June 1, 1864). Four years later the perennial Eastern Question assumed an acute phase on a rising against their Turkish oppressors by the Christian population of Crete. Alexander II invited England and France to join him in bringing pressure to bear on the Sultan : and suggested that the island should gain autonomy as a vassal State of Turkey. England, however, rejected a policy which she believed would lead to the ruin of her *protégé*. The great Powers contented themselves with proposing a suspension of hostilities in Crete and a settlement of the vexed question of its government by plebiscite (June 15, 1867). Their note met with a refusal from Turkey, and Europe looked on while the unhappy island was a prey to civil war. Russia's regard for the European concert was carried to extreme limits in 1869, when the armed intervention of Greece in the Cretan quarrel brought down on her an ultimatum from Turkey. At Gorchakov's initiative a Conference met at Paris which imposed neutrality on King George and left Crete to its fate (February 18). Alexander's influence was exercised more effectually in favour of the Servian Christians. In 1866 he induced the Sultan to evacuate Belgrad and other Servian fortresses held by his troops ; and on the death of Prince Michael Obrenovich by an assassin's hand he procured the Porte's recognition of the murdered man's nephew, who succeeded him as Milan IV (July 1869).

Russia's chief successes in this reign were won on the Asiatic continent, and her eastward path was smoothed by the conquest of the Caucasus. In August 1859 Shamil was blockaded in his last stronghold, Gunib, and surrendered at discretion, receiving the generous treatment due to his heroism. Thus the southern highlands came beneath the sway of Russia.

In the north the Cherkesses held out under their leader Muhammad Amir. But the Cossack posts were pushed forward relentlessly; and the tribesmen were given a choice between settling in the open country behind the cordon, or emigrating to Turkey. A minority of them adopted the first alternative and peopled the lower reaches of the Kuban; but 70,000 crossed the Turkish frontier, after fruitlessly appealing for help to England. The remainder fought desperately for several years, and were at length surrounded in the valley of Aiglos by converging columns. In June, 1864, they laid down their arms, and the Grand Duke Michael, who commanded the combined movement, was able to report that there remained not a single tribe to conquer. The Cherkesses were driven from their mountains to the swampy shores of the Black Sea, where they perished in thousands from malaria. The survivors were conveyed by sea to Turkish ports, where they spread over the interior and became cruel persecutors of the Sultan's Christian subjects. Military roads, with forts at the chief strategic points, have proved as effectual in the Caucasus as the means taken by George the Second's ministers to pacify the Scottish highlands.

Russia thus obtained a direct line of advance upon Central Asia. She had already secured the control of the Oxus and Jaxartes, the main highways of trade in those regions, while Fort Verni commanded the river Ili and the mountainous tract between Lake Balkash and Isik Kul. But five hundred miles of unprotected frontier lay between Verni and Perovski, through which the Kirghiz and Turkoman tribesmen were able to raid Siberia. The people of Kokand, too, were not restrained by the Russian posts on the Sir Darya from pillaging caravans; and the frontier was kept in a continual ferment. No course lay open to the Russians but to attempt the conquest of Kokand. In 1863 Staff-Colonel Chernaiev moved southwards from the basin of the Ili against Ali Ata, which commanded the Kara Tau range; while Verevkin led a column from a base on the

Sir Darya for an attack on Turkestan, a Kokandi stronghold which afterwards gave its name to the entire province. After capturing both fortresses the two forces united and stormed Chemkent, 500 miles south-east of Perovski. These successes excited alarm in Russophobe circles in England, which Gorchakov sought to allay by his famous circular of November 16, 1864. He pointed out the dilemma in which a civilised State is placed by coming into contact with marauding tribes. With such, peace and amity were impossible. It must conquer them, or see the frontier a prey to anarchy. But tribes thus subdued become in their turn victims of aggression on the part of their untamed neighbours; and the process of conquest must be repeated until the paramount Power has advanced its borders up to those of a State whose organisation offers reasonable guarantees of ability to maintain order at home.

The foreign Minister believed that Russia's recent conquests had given her the needful frontier, protected as it was by a chain of forts stretching across the well-watered country between the Sir Darya and Lake Balkash. She had secured abundant supplies for her garrisons, and the vicinity of powerful states. Gorchakov omitted to reckon three factors in the evolution of Asiatic empires—the remoteness of the theatre of events, religious fanaticism, and a thirst for glory. The last was conspicuous in General Chernaiev, a man who, under happier auspices, might have been the Clive of Russian Asia. Learning that the Kokandis had gathered in vast numbers at Tashkent, 80 miles south of Chemkent, he mustered every available man and marched against that city. His first assault failed, owing to the absence of a breaching-train. The result was in accord with the oriental character. Crowds flocked to the enemy's standard; and, in the full assurance that they were invincible, they burnt Chemkent and laid siege to Turkestan. Chernaiev was aware that his only chance of safety lay in becoming master of Tashkent; but at this crisis he received peremptory orders from the Tsar to make no second attempt.

He delayed opening the despatch until he had again assailed the hornets' nest. It was stormed; and then the too daring general took cognisance of his master's behests. "Sire," was his reply, "your Majesty's orders forbidding me to take Tashkent reached me in the heart of that city, which I place at your feet!" Alexander's anger at this flagrant disobedience knew no bounds: but it was impossible to disregard accomplished facts. A ukase of February, 14, 1865, constituted the whole territory between the Aral Sea and Issik Kul, a province styled Turkestan, and placed it under the Governor-General of Western Siberia.

Thus a second stage was reached in the advance of Russia. Her Asiatic dominions extended from the north-eastern shores of the Caspian to the confines of China: and their boundary was pushed forward to the edge of the Samarkand plateau. The three great khanates of Central Asia—Bokhara, Kokand, and Khiva—were within striking distances. Their mutual jealousies disappeared before a common foe; and all good Mussulmans looked for deliverance to Muzaffar-ed-Din, Amir of Bokhara. His bigotry rendered him the slave of the priesthood, who are bitterly hostile to Christian rule: his claim to descent from the all-conquering Timur led him to emulate the exploits of his predecessor on the throne of Samarkand. Muzaffar-ed-Din placed himself at the head of a coalition, and sent emissaries to preach a holy war in every market-place throughout the khanates. Thousands flocked to the green standard of the Prophet which the Amir raised at Khojend, on the north-western frontier of Samarkand. He summoned Chernaiev to relinquish his conquests, and made prisoners of four envoys sent from Tashkent to treat for peace. This act of war met with an unexpected response. In February, 1866, Chernaiev mustered 14 companies of infantry, 6 Cossack sotnias, and 16 field-guns, and plunged into the desert of Kizil Kum, which separated him from Khojend. At Jizak his slender force was enveloped by dense masses of the enemy; supplies

failed, and he was compelled to retire on his base, Tashkent. Nothing is so perilous as a retrograde movement in the face of Asiatics. The Amir gained many thousands of adherents and advanced against Tashkent.

At this critical moment Chernaiev, who had not been forgiven for his glorious disobedience, was superseded by General Romanovski, who had peremptory orders from the Tsar to conclude peace. The new leader found compliance impossible. His capital seethed with revolt, and quiescence would have been fatal to the Russian cause. He collected 3,600 men, all told, and following the left bank of the Zarafshan reached Irjai, midway between Jizak and Khojend, on May 20, 1866. Here he found the Amir of Bokhara entrenched with 40,000 followers, and hurled his handful of men against the enemy's position. Irjai, like Plassey, was less a battle than a rout. The Mussulman hordes could not withstand the impact of a European force. They broke, and fled in disorder to Samarkand. That city lay at the conqueror's mercy; but he deemed it more prudent to capture Khojend and so drive a wedge between the territories of Bokhara and Kokand. It fell on June 6, after eight days' bombardment.

Dismay was spread through Central Asia by the collapse of its most doughty champion; but the priests were unwilling to relinquish their influence. They persuaded Muzaffar-ed-Din to disregard Romanovski's peace overtures and prepare for another trial of strength. The Russians, therefore, resumed the offensive. They captured the Bokharan fortresses of Ura Tepe, Jizak, and Yani Kurgan in rapid succession. By the middle of 1867 Romanovski was master of the entire basin of the Zarafshan, the main source of Bokharan wealth. Orenburg was too remote to serve as a capital of this vast acquisition. By a ukase of July 23, 1867, Turkestan was made a Governor-Generalship, and placed under General Kaufmann, one of those eager, intriguing spirits who have served Russia so admirably in the East. His attitude was at first conciliatory. He sent

the Amir peace proposals, on the basis of a recognition of existing boundaries, the payment of a war-indemnity, and the grant of equal commercial rights to Russians and Bokharanis. Muzaffar-ed-Dīn's reply was to obtain reinforcements from his ward, the young Khan of Kokand, and to mass his forces for the siege of Jizak. Kaufmann anticipated the attack by marching against Samarkand. This was indeed a rash enterprise, for Timur's old capital was a hot-bed of Muhammadan bigotry; and its citizens were reminded by many a relic of a mighty past that it was once the capital of an empire which regarded Muscovy as an outlying province. On May 24, 1868, the Russians came in view of a host entrenched on the heights which overlook the Zarafshan, fifteen miles from Samarkand. Forging the shallow river they fell upon the Bokharans and drove them pell-mell from the field. On the morrow Samarkand surrendered: and Kaufmann, leaving a small garrison in the citadel, sallied forth with the bulk of his troops to open the way for an advance on the city of Bokhara. In his absence the handful of Russians left in Samarkand were attacked by the treacherous citizens. They defended the citadel with a heroism which recalls that of the Lucknow Residency garrison in 1857. When their last cartridge was spent Kaufmann appeared on the scene. He smote the besiegers hip and thigh. The streets of Samarkand ran with blood, and it was delivered over to pillage for four days.

Muzaffar-ed-Dīn was now fain to admit that the Great White Tsar was invincible. His haughty spirit was humbled to the dust. He offered to surrender the whole of his territories and retire to end his days at Mecca. The Russians, however, preferred to concede a measure of autonomy to a turbulent population very remote from their bases of advance. By a treaty signed in November 1868, Muzaffar-ed-Din was confirmed as Amir of Bokhara, but he was compelled to pay a war indemnity of £200,000 and to cede his richest province, Samarkand. Thus the Russians gained control over the

upper reaches of the Zarafshan, whose waters are of vital necessity to Bokhara. In December 1873 a new commercial treaty was concluded with the Amir. He obtained a strip on the left bank of the Amu Darya wrested from the Khan of Khiva, and in return gave the Russians equal privileges of trade with those enjoyed by his own subjects, limiting the import duties to two and a half per cent. *ad valorem*. He further agreed to receive a Russian Resident at his court. In the relations established with Bokhara Alexander II imitated those which prevail between our Indian feudatory princes and the Supreme Government. Bokhara has retained its laws and institutions under the Resident's tactful control. Its army is an untrained mob of 10,000 men, which exists only for the purposes of police and display. Muzaffar-ed-Din accepted his diminished status with the resignation inculcated by his creed; and Russia has no more obedient vassal than his successor, the Amir 'Abdul 'Ahad.

The reduction of Khiva was a necessary result of Bokhara's fall. This khanate stretched far into the newly-conquered territory; it dominated the lower reaches of the Amu Darya; and Khivan troops had fought under the luckless Muzaffar-ed-Din's banner. The youthful ruler provoked reprisals by prohibiting the export of grain and harrying Russian garrisons; while many hundreds of the Tsar's subjects were held in bondage at Khiva. Kaufmann's lust of conquest was long restrained by the imperial will. But in 1873 a point was reached when the most timid of Alexander's advisers was forced to admit that further inaction was impossible. Kaufmann received a free hand; and, taught by his predecessor's failures, he left nothing to chance. In the early spring of 1873 five converging columns started from Krasnovodsk, a Caspian port which had been founded in 1870, Chikisliar on the same coast, Orenburg, Perovski, and Tashkent. Those which left the Caspian bases were nearly destroyed by the fearful cold of the Ust Urt desert and beat a retreat.



The others met under the walls of Khiva; and the city was carried by storm on June 10. The Uzbek Khan, Sayyid Mohammad Rahim, fled, but he soon returned in response to overtures from Kaufmann. On July 5, 1873, he executed a treaty of peace and amity which secured a war indemnity of £250,000 and the manumission of Russian slaves. The Khan surrendered his possessions on the left bank of the Amu Darya, near Charjui; and the navigation of the entire river passed into the conquerors' hands. Khiva was opened to Russian commerce, which was relieved from the burden of transit duties.

The respite enjoyed by Kokand—now the only remaining independent State of Central Asia—was not prolonged. Its territory severed the Russian provinces from those of China: the Khan was universally detested, and a civil war was raging. This unrest was not to be tolerated; and in September 1875 Kaufmann invaded Kokand with a lieutenant who was destined to win glory in other fields. This was a young staff-captain, named Skobelev, whose instincts as a freebooter found ample scope in a war of aggression. The Russians defeated a mob of 30,000 Kokandis with ease, and took possession of the capital. A new Khan was installed under their protection; but he was not able to hold his own. The entire population rose against the puppet ruler and massacred the Russian garrison. Skobelev made short work of the rebels; and his chief found no course open to him but annexation. A ukase of March 20, 1876, constituted Kokand a province of Turkestan under its ancient title of Ferghana. The conquest of the Khanates was complete.

British statesmen who watched the eastward trend of Russia were ranged under two banners. The Russophobes regarded every step made by our rivals in Asia as a direct menace to British India. In their opinion we should anticipate the coming invasion by a "forward policy." The Indian frontiers were insecure; we must strengthen them by subjugating Afghanistan, the intervening hill tribes, and Biluchistan, which covers the

approaches by way of Persia. Our intermeddling in Afghan politics, which led to the disastrous wars of 1838-42, was due to the promptings of this school; and they were also seen in the undignified protests elicited by every new Russian conquest. A calmer view of the situation was taken by their opponents, whose watchword was "masterly inactivity"—a phrase employed by their leader Lord Lawrence. They ascribed the eastward movement of Russia to an instinctive longing for warmer climate and ports unblocked by ice. Her policy in lessening the gap between the Indian frontier and that of her own possessions indicated a wish to gain the means of applying a counter-irritant, should Great Britain thwart her designs in other directions. India with her poverty, her swarming peasant-proletariat ever on the brink of pestilence and famine, could have no attraction for Russia, which does not yet possess a middle class requiring scope for its redundant energies. The Indian empire is well guarded on the north and north-east by an impenetrable mountain wall; and on the north-west the immense distances to be traversed by an invading host are obstacles almost as effectual. The advocates of masterly inactivity opposed any attempt to conquer the mountain tribes on the north-western frontier, for this would convert allies into bitter foes. They preferred leaving Afghanistan under a native ruler, whose will-power and resources should make him the master of its untamed inhabitants. Bound to us by ties of self-interest and guarantees of help in case of unprovoked aggression, Afghanistan would become an outlying bulwark of British India. But, after all, our chief security against invasion lay in a firm and sympathetic government within our borders. India might defy attack if the masses were contented with our rule; if feudatory princes were loyal, and the educated class found scope for its just political ambitions. The history of our relations with Russia since the treaties of 1815 is that of a constant struggle between these opposite schools of thought.

In January 1869, while the alarm caused by the conquest

of Samarkand was still at its height, the Earl of Mayo became Viceroy of India. While he held much in common with Lord Lawrence, he took a wider view of Russia's mission in the East, and did not hesitate to declare that an understanding between the two Empires was essential to the true interests of their Asiatic subjects. Our Foreign Minister, Lord Clarendon, was led by this great statesman to negotiate with the Russian Foreign Office in view of defining the respective spheres of influence in Asia. Gorchakov was by principle inclined to conciliate England, and he met Russophobe suspicions by explanations which were often belied by the inexorable logic of events. Thus, before the Khivan expedition started, he gave a positive assurance to the British Foreign Minister that Kaufmann had been forbidden to annex the khanate. When the campaign was crowned with success the two cabinets resumed the thread of diplomacy; and Gorchakov put forward the ingenious device of interposing a "Buffer-State" between the Asiatic frontiers of England and Russia. The needful conditions were, to all appearance, offered by Afghanistan with the Pamirs, and the districts of Badakshan, Wakhan, Kunduz, and Balkh. Lord Derby, who had succeeded Clarendon at the Foreign Office, insisted on complete liberty of action at the southern frontier of Afghanistan; and Gorchakov was content to yield this point because it left the habitat of the Turkoman tribes within the sphere of Russian influence. In 1873 an understanding was arrived at which left Afghanistan within the orbit of British influence. Gorchakov accepted a demarcation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan which had been proposed by Lord Clarendon, and adroitly assumed that the understanding included a British guarantee against any encroachment of the Amir on his northern neighbours. A subsequent disclaimer by Mr Gladstone in the House of Commons was interpreted by Russian opinion as a repudiation of the entire arrangement.

Lord Mayo had conciliated the sullen Sher Ali, Amir of

Afghanistan. On his untimely death by assassination (Feb. 8, 1872) Lord Northbrook succeeded to power; and his foreign policy proved him to be an enlightened follower of Lawrence's views. In 1876, however, the Viceroyalty was conferred on the Earl of Lytton, who was a prominent champion of the forward policy. He attempted in 1877 to persuade the Amir to allow British officers to reside in Afghanistan; and when the proposal was rejected, he stopped the subsidy granted by Lord Mayo. Sher Ali, already alienated, took mortal offence: and the Russian government saw in his outraged feelings a means of requiting the hostility shown by Great Britain, and neutralising her intervention at the close of the Turkish war. In the summer of 1878, while the Congress of Berlin was sitting, General Stolietov conducted a Russian mission to Kabul, which was warmly received by the Amir. A treaty was then and there executed which placed Afghanistan under the Tsar's protection. This encroachment led to the Second Afghan War of 1878-81, which ended in Great Britain's favour after a course marked by military reverses and grave errors of policy. Afghanistan fell into the capable hands of Abdur Rahman: and it has since fulfilled all the functions of a buffer State. The result was a severe blow to Russian prestige; and Kaufmann's meddlesomeness brought down an imperial reprimand. In 1880 he was forbidden to hold any intercourse with the Amir of Afghanistan.

The agreement of 1873 left Russia free to deal with the Turkoman tribes as she listed. Between the Caspian and the Amu Darya lay 230,000 square miles of desert which, in 1874, was constituted a province under the title of Transcaspia. But the Russian hold on this immense tract was precarious. The oases with which it was studded were held by various Turkoman tribes which had never endured a foreign yoke. Among these the Tekkes were the most numerous and highly organised. They peopled the Akkal and Merv oases, whence they carried their raids far into Persia and Afghanistan. These

freebooters saw the sphere of their mischievous activity yearly lessened by the closing chain of Russian outposts. Slavery was put down by treaty in Khiva and Bokhara; and the tribesmen lost a market for the main objects of their marauding expedition. But they were still free to attack Russian caravans bringing Chinese tea and silks to Orenburg; and Kaufmann had no difficulty in obtaining his master's leave to suppress them. In August, 1879, General Lomakin, the Governor of Transcaspia, received orders to attack Danjil Teppe, an entrenched camp held by the Tekkes in the Akkal oasis. Marching from the Caspian with camel transport he reached the freebooters' stronghold on September 9. After pouring a terrible fire of shell and grape-shot into the dense mass of felt tents, he attempted to storm its earthen ramparts. The besiegers were foiled owing to the absence of scaling-ladders, and a panic seized them. Abandoning the position they retreated to their Caspian base in the utmost disorder. News of their defeat was carried by the Tekkes throughout Central Asia. Their raids extended into Bokharan territory, and the desert was closed to Russian caravans.

Alexander II resented the shock to his prestige, and he turned for counsel to the most brilliant soldier in his armies. This was Michael Dimitriavich Skobelev, who had won glory in the Turkish War. To military genius he added that magnetic personal charm which belongs only to born leaders of mankind, and served in his case to counterbalance an absence of truth and scruple. At the beginning of 1880 a conference took place between the Tsar, his War Minister, Miliutin, and Skobelev, in which the causes of Lomakin's discomfiture were probed to the bottom. It was due mainly to defective transport: 12,000 of his camels had perished in the advance, and their loss prevented a renewal of the siege operations. An inspiration led Skobelev to invoke the aid of steam, for he was aware that a want of water was the only difficulty which railway engineers would encounter in the dead level of the Turkoman

desert. Before the close of 1880 a light line was laid from Usan Ada on the Caspian to Mulla Kari, and the water supply was assured by the erection of a vast distillery. As orientals attach exaggerated importance to artillery, Skobelev insisted on the despatch of a gun for every 1000 men of his numerical strength. The felt *kibitkas* of the Turkomans were fire-proof: but the Russian supplies included a supply of shells charged with petroleum. Skobelev was named "Commander-in-Chief of the troops operating in the Caspian," with full power to negotiate with neighbouring States and organise Russia's new possessions. His Chief of the Staff was General Alexis Kurapatkin, who had served him with zeal in that capacity during the Turkish War.

In the meantime the Turkomans prepared for a desperate resistance. They were concentrated in two camps surrounded by earthen ramparts in the centre of the Akkal oasis and watered by streams from the Kopet Dag mountains, which divide Transcaspia from Persia. The Russian forces, consisting of 8,000 men with 53 cannon and 12 machine-guns, reached their objective on December 24, after a march of five hundred miles through a waterless desert. The smaller camp was taken by storm; and its defenders were driven into the main position, styled Geok Tepe, from a neighbouring hamlet. On January 4, 1881, the Russians laid their first parallel against its southern face. The siege lasted for three weeks and was marked by determined heroism on the part of the beleaguered Turkomans. They had hitherto been regarded as freebooters of the ordinary type, who never venture to attack except in overwhelming strength. Their defence of these paltry entrenchments showed what they could accomplish when driven to bay, in defence of their families and freedom. They bore without flinching a shell-fire which wrought fearful havoc in their densely packed *kibitkas*. Their nightly sorties spread panic in the trenches and they captured no fewer than 14 cannon. But the Russian sap was steadily pushed forward;

and on January 23 a practicable breach was reported at the south-eastern angle. On the morrow a mine was sprung which made a yawning gap in the Turkomans' rampart. It was the signal for the advance of four storming columns, two of which were commanded by Skobelev and Kurapatkin. After a hand-to-hand struggle the garrison were driven from their entrenchment and mercilessly cut down by pursuing Cossacks as they swarmed out on the plain northwards. The siege cost Russia 800 in killed and wounded, while the loss of the Turkomans exceeded 9,000. Geok Teppe ranks among the decisive battles of Asia. It destroyed the tribal organisation of the Tekkes, who abandoned their raids, and turned in sullen despair to the pursuits of civil life. The hardy breed of horses which carried them immense distances in their expeditions is extinct. Geok Teppe is now a peaceful railway station; and Turkomans may be seen toiling at a cotton-press within the precincts of the robbers' lair. The victory relieved northern Persia and Afghanistan of an incubus; and caravans now traverse the Turkoman desert without molestation. By the Khanates Geok Teppe was accepted as a death-blow to their cherished hopes of regaining independence. It made the Tsar unquestioned master in Central Asia.

These conquests brought Russia into close contact with Chinese Turkestan. The two Empires were divided by the Pamirs, but no attempt had been made on either side to trace a boundary in that mountain citadel with its labyrinth of outlying spurs. At the eastern edge of this debateable land a Muhammadan adventurer named Yakub Beg established himself in 1866 as ruler of Kashgar, which China had annexed in the preceding century. Its southern frontier impinged on the British sphere of influence; and overtures for an alliance made by Yakub Beg were welcomed in London and Calcutta. His growing power excited Russian jealousy: and an effort was made to curb it by the erection of a fortress at Naryn

commanding the chief passes leading into Kashgar. This step was followed by an invasion of the adjacent Chinese district of Kulja, on the pretext of pacification. Thus the Russians became masters of the river Ili, a main artery of Chinese trade; and indignant protests were received from Peking. In 1877 the vast recuperative power of China had obliterated the scars of the Taeping rebellion. An expedition was sent against Yakub Beg, who succumbed after making a stout resistance. His territories were reannexed to China, and the Tsar received an invitation to evacuate Kulja. He found his account in surrendering a portion of the Russian spoils, but secured solid advantages in return. Under a treaty executed in April 1881 Russia kept the western moiety of Kulja, with the lower reaches of the Ili, and obtained access to Hankow, a great trade centre on the Yangtse Kiang. China regained the eastern portion of Kulja and the strategic points which menaced Kashgar. This convention is memorable because it affords the only example of a voluntary recoil in Russia's eastward advance.

While she was steadily building up an Empire in Central Asia, Russia did not neglect her interests at the eastern extremity of the Continent. Autocracy apart, she enjoys many of the advantages claimed for a democratic régime, for the weakness of privilege and caste-feeling open the door of public employment to merit and ambition in every class. Muraviev, who had been selected by Nicholas I as Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, served his country as indefatigably on the Pacific shore as Chernaiev and Kaufmann in the heart of Asia. The Russian acquisitions in those remote regions marched with China, whose seclusion was rudely broken by the commercial enterprise of the Western Powers; and Muraviev succeeded in convincing the suspicious Celestials that they had in Russia a protector against these unwelcome aggressions. Under the Treaty of Aigun (May 1858) he obtained the cession of the Pacific seaboard between the



rivers Amur and Usur. When the Treaty of Tientsin (June 1858), supplemented by a Convention imposed on China at the close of a war with England and France (October 1860), gave the allies large commercial privileges, Muraviev claimed equal rights for his own country. Hitherto inland trade between the two Empires had been confined to a point south of Lake Baikal. By a treaty with China, signed in November 1860, this restriction was swept away in the case of caravans of less than 200 persons; and the previous agreement of Aigun was confirmed. The Amur became a Russian river, and was protected by a chain of fortresses. At the southern bend of the Pacific seaboard the Russians founded Vladivostok, which serves as an admirable naval base despite the ice which blocks it during the winter months. In May 1867 these new possessions were consolidated by the sale to the United States of Alaska, a subarctic region 530,000 square miles in area, separated from Asia by Behring's Straits. In view of subsequent discoveries of gold, the purchase price—7,200,000 dollars—was far beneath its value. On the other hand Russia gained a site for a huge penal settlement in the island of Sakhalin, which was ceded by Japan in 1875 in exchange for the two southernmost islands of the Kurile group.

Meanwhile events took place in the near East which eclipsed the interest excited by these distant exploits. Slavophilism, evoked by the Polish insurrection, was the motive force in play. Its propaganda spread rapidly. In 1867 a congress was held under imperial patronage at Moscow; and the Holy City gave a warm greeting to delegates from every branch of the Slavonic race. It soon became evident that no base of common action was to be hoped for. The want of a common language was less at fault than divergences of sentiment and politics. Unity under the aegis of Russia did not commend itself to a Pole, whose heart was wrung by his country's misfortunes, or to a Bohemian or a Croat, on whom Austria's dominion pressed but lightly. Slavophiles were not

disheartened by their failure. If their brethren in Austria-Hungary and Poland were lukewarm, the Slavs of Turkey offered a wide field for their energy. A movement set in which resembled the missionary enterprises of Great Britain. It began with modest gifts of holy books to Christian villages. As subscriptions poured in, the sphere of activity widened. Churches and schools multiplied, and exhibitions tenable at some Russian university were founded for the benefit of Serbs and Bulgars. Emissaries travelled through northern Turkey, inciting the Christians to resist exaction and promising the active support of the Slav empire of the north. In this manner the interest of the political situation shifted to the Balkan peninsula; and all the elements of unrest already existed in the states into which it was parcelled. The northernmost, Rumania, is peopled by a race which has but a small tincture of Slavonic blood. The Rumanians' alleged descent from Trajan's legionaries is justified by their language, eloquence, and bravery. In 1866 a revolution broke out at the capital, Bucharest. The Cuza family was deprived of the hospodarship; and Prince Charles of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen was elected to the vacant throne by a popular assembly. He had a large share of the military genius of his family; and the Rumanian army grew formidable in numbers and efficiency. But his subjects dreaded Muscovite aggression, preferring to render a small tribute to the Sultan in token of his suzerainty. Thus the country was not a suitable soil for Slavophil missionaries. Things were different in Servia, which with French and Russian help had got rid of the Turkish garrisons in 1868. During the same year Prince Nicholas of Montenegro visited St Petersburg, and returned to his little territory a willing agent of Russian designs. The Slavs who remained under Turkish rule in Bulgaria, Bosnia, and Herzegovina were equally amenable to the new doctrine, for they were cruelly treated by their masters, especially by the Cherkesses, who had been expelled by Russian conquest from the Caucasus.

In 1865 General Ignatiev was appointed ambassador at Constantinople. He was an enthusiastic Slavophil, and possessed a genius for intrigue which had full scope in the troubled waters of the Levant. At first he dallied with the Greeks and won their Patriarch's friendship; while an apparent zeal for orthodoxy attracted the respect of the other Christian communities. Thus the magnitude of the interests which he represented gave him greater weight with the moody despot who governed Turkey than any of his colleagues enjoyed. His position at Constantinople, in fact, resembled that of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe at the outbreak of the Crimean War. Finding himself strong enough to thrust aside the ladder, he showed the Greeks by his attitude during the Cretan insurrection of 1868 that they were powerless without the aid of Russia. With secret encouragement from him the Bulgarians refused religious allegiance to the Greek Patriarch, and claimed an independent Church. Appealed to by both sides in the quarrel, Ignatiev made a pretence of impartiality, but finally threw his whole weight into the Bulgarians' scale and secured their triumph. In 1872 they obtained by firman an Exarch of their own. Thenceforward the Greeks and their Patriarch were Ignatiev's bitter foes. In 1875 the Bulgarian Christians rose in insurrection against Turkish tax-farmers, and the flame spread to Servia and Montenegro. It was fomented by the Slavophil committees, who sent money and supplies to the insurgents and filled their ranks with volunteers. A civil war seemed imminent. The effervescence was calmed by Ignatiev, for the time for action had not arrived. By threatening Abdul 'Aziz with his bugbear, European intervention, he procured a firman which confirmed all the privileges vouchsafed to Turkish Christians.

Russia's evident desire to disregard the European concert aroused suspicion in Austria-Hungary. Count Andrassy, who had fought against Russia in the Hungarian rebellion of 1849, was then prime minister. He prepared a counter-move in the

shape of a comprehensive scheme of reform. The Andrassy Note of December 30, 1875, demanded the abolition of revenue-farming, decentralisation in provincial expenditure, and relief to Christian agriculturists. This specious project was accepted by the Triple Alliance; and England, France, and Italy joined in presenting the Andrassy Note to the Sultan, who astutely accepted it without demur (Feb. 10). It was far from satisfying the Slavophil committees, which incited the Servian rebels to demand impracticable conditions and continue the struggle with their suzerain. A religious war began, and the flame spread to Bulgaria, where the revolt was put down with relentless fury by Cherkess and Bashibazuk irregulars. Europe heard with horror that scores of towns had been blotted out of existence, 15,000 Christians put to the sword, and nameless atrocities perpetrated on the women-folk and children. In Russia the news aroused a roar of execration; and Alexander foresaw that he would be compelled to intervene by force of arms. The excitement spread to Constantinople, where the Sultan's subservience to Ignatiev inspired indignation in the priesthood and students of the religious schools. Mobs paraded the streets with cries of "Turkey for the Turks"; and the Sultan was forced to dismiss his Grand Vizier. The European population stood in peril of extermination; and at their entreaties England despatched a fleet to Besika Bay (May 26). A final attempt to cope with the situation was made by the Triple Alliance. On May 13 the Chancellors of the constituent Powers met at Berlin and drew up a note addressed to Turkey which demanded an armistice, and the execution of Andrassy's reforms under the supervision of foreign delegates. The Sultan was menaced with concerted pressure and the presence of a combined fleet in Turkish waters. Slavophil influence appeared in a suggestion that the insurgents should be assisted to rebuild their churches and dwellings. The Berlin Memorandum was approved by France and Italy; but Great Britain stood aloof. It was not presented to the Porte, for the popular clamour at

Constantinople gave birth to a revolution. On May 29, 1876, Abdul 'Aziz was deposed and murdered; and his nephew girded on the sword of Othman as Murad V.

Gorchakov, like his master, foresaw that Russia would be drawn into the struggle, and he made overtures to Austria-Hungary for concerted action. The Emperor Francis-Joseph enunciated as guiding principles, that his interests forbade the establishment of a Slav state on the lower reaches of the Danube, and that any drastic changes in the Balkans would compel him to seek compensation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This basis was accepted by the Tsar, who put forward a claim to the retrocession of the moiety of Bessarabia annexed to Moldavia in 1856.

He was under no illusions as to the perils involved in drawing the sword. The reorganisation of his army was far from complete; his finances had barely regained equilibrium after years of deficit; and his fleet in the Black Sea was admittedly inferior to the Sultan's. But Alexander's earnest wish to restrict himself to moral pressure was defeated by the delirium into which his subjects plunged. Aid of all kinds poured into Servia, the Russian Red Cross Society being especially active on the rebels' side. Christianity itself became an instrument of war. The Servian ranks were stiffened by thousands of military volunteers, and command was taken by Chernaiev of Central Asian fame. Little Montenegro rose in sympathy with the movement, and on July 2, 1876, declared war against Turkey.

Turkey's rebellious vassals were no match for her trained forces under the capable command of Mukhtar Pasha; and the Servians were compelled to seek the mediation of the guaranteeing Powers. A week later (Aug. 31) another Palace revolution broke out at Constantinople. Murad V, whose health and brain-power were manifestly unequal to the strain placed upon them, was supplanted by his half-brother. The new Sultan, who mounted the throne as Abdul Hamid II, had

an infusion of Armenian blood, with an equal measure of the astuteness of his mother's race. He pushed the war with Servia vigorously, and forced the rebels to sue for an armistice (Sept. 17).

Public opinion in England had hitherto inclined to the Turkish side. A revulsion took place when the nameless cruelties wrought in Bulgaria were revealed by the reports of British newspaper-correspondents. Mr Gladstone, who was at this time in opposition, made the strong feeling thus evoked serve his political ambition. His highly-coloured pamphlet, "Bulgarian Horrors" (1876), and his impassioned eloquence on the platform, deeply stirred the national conscience and reduced Turkey's friends to silence. Gorchakov, ever watchful, took advantage of the change in public opinion; but his overtures for joint action were met by the Foreign Secretary, Lord Derby, in a spirit of opportunism. He replied that the insurgents' demand was not reform but complete autonomy, and it could be extorted from Turkey only by the application of force. To this course England would never consent. Let Europe wait, and watch the Christian rising. If it succeeded, Bulgaria might be vouchsafed the same measure of self-government as Servia and Rumania enjoyed. In the event of failure, the Bulgarians would necessarily moderate their claims, and a basis of common action on their behalf might be arrived at. These Fabian tactics were not to Gorchakov's taste. He urged the wisdom of intervening ere the revolt should spread; and Lord Derby was compelled by the unmistakable voice of public opinion to join in a last effort to coerce Turkey.

The six great Powers presented a Memorandum (Sept. 1876) to the Sultan demanding the restoration of the *status quo* in Servia and Montenegro, local autonomy in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and guarantees of internal reforms. Abdul Hamid refused to go beyond vague promises of amendment. The Servians and their allies were equally obstinate. They resumed the offensive, but were unable to withstand the impact of

200,000 men under Mukhtar Pasha. One position after another was captured by the Turks, the heaviest losses falling on the Russian volunteers. Alexander could not look on unmoved while his co-religionists were crushed. He demanded a six weeks' armistice on their behalf (Oct. 31). Abdul Hamid offered to suspend hostilities for six months; but Gorchakov represented the unwisdom of keeping the Servians so long in ignorance of their fate. The war proceeded, with constant advantages to the Turkish armies. At the beginning of November they were virtually masters of Servia; and Chernaiev acknowledged his impotence to struggle on unaided. He left Servia on Nov. 4, after exhorting his friends to continue resistance.

Their cause was espoused by Alexander, who wrung an armistice for two months from Turkey by the threat of intervention (Nov. 1), and employed the brief respite in efforts aimed at conciliation. In an interview with our ambassador he lamented the distrust of Russian designs evinced in England; and, rather late in the day, put forward the trite expedient of a European Conference. It was eagerly seized by Great Britain. A programme was framed; and by two clauses inserted at her request the Powers undertook to respect Turkish independence, nor to seek singly for any exclusive advantage.

In the interval Alexander reluctantly prepared for the inevitable trial of strength. His War Minister and every superior officer in his army clamoured for prompt intervention. Katkov sounded the tocsin in the press; while Ignatiev's intrigues were aimed at making a peaceful solution impossible. On his journey northwards from the Crimea Alexander halted at the Slavophil Mecca, Moscow, and threw down the gauntlet in a speech delivered there on November 10. He was anxious to spare the effusion of Russian blood at almost any sacrifice: but he would act alone in support of his brethren in race and religion, unless a common agreement was arrived at by the Conference.

On Dec. 5, 1876, the statesmen on whose deliberations such mighty issues hung assembled at Constantinople. Three preliminary meetings were given to the programme. The delegates agreed that Austria-Hungary should acquire Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Russia the cis-Danubian portion of Bessarabia; and that the Servian frontier was to be extended eastwards. In the event of Turkey's dissolution, Bulgaria, Rumelia, and Albania were to gain independence; Greece might annex Thessaly and Candia; while Constantinople was to become a free city. Russia made it clear that peace depended on the Sultan's acceptance of these hard conditions. She had the active countenance of Germany. Prince Bismarck told the Reichstag that the Tsar's intentions were free from selfishness, and he strove to bring Russia and Austria-Hungary together.

While Europe was discussing the fate of the Ottoman empire it showed unlooked-for signs of vitality. Abdul Hamid called the reforming Midhat Pasha to his councils as Grand Vizier, and on Dec. 23 he proclaimed a constitution. It provided all the mechanism of Western political science—a Senate, popular education, freedom of religion and of the press, equal taxation and independent judges. On the same day the Conference commenced its public sessions; but its failure was rendered certain by the Sultan's astute appeal to the party of reform. The conclusions arrived at were vetoed by the National Council of Turkey (Jan. 1877); and the delegates quitted Constantinople on Jan. 20. The only outcome was a feeble Protocol signed by the six great Powers on March 31, in which they recorded a conviction that the state of affairs in Turkey was incompatible with the happiness of the Sultan's Christian subjects.

By a declaration attached to this state paper, Russia signified an intention of holding her hand only if peace were made with Montenegro. Abdul Hamid made terms with the Servians on the basis of existing conditions; but the first and last Turkish Parliament, which opened on March 19, 1877, voted the continuance of hostilities with Montenegro. On



April 12 the Protocol was rejected by the Sultan. This step was the abdication of diplomacy; and the Tsar read it in that light. On April 24, 1877, he joined the army head-quarters in Bessarabia, and declared war with Turkey. Great Britain was emphatic in her disapproval. In reply to an explanatory circular issued by Gorchakov, Lord Derby told Russia plainly that her independent action was a breach of the Treaty of Paris, and would not benefit Turkish Christians. He demanded pledges that Egypt, Constantinople, and the Persian Gulf would be excluded from the military operations. Gorchakov, conciliatory according to his wont where England was concerned, gave the required undertaking, and admitted that the future of Constantinople and the adjacent straits was a matter for European decision.

Montenegro sprang to arms at the call of Russia; but British diplomacy secured the quiescence of Servia and Greece. Rumania's dread of the great Slav Empire inclined her to neutrality, but after a fruitless appeal to the great Powers for a recognition of her independence she grudgingly complied with Russia's demand for leave to cross her territories. The situation was so critical that Prince Charles mobilised his army and watched the course of events. Russia's plan of campaign provided for a parallel attack on Turkey's European and Asiatic provinces. Following the precedent set by the King of Prussia during the war of 1870, Alexander entrusted supreme command to members of his own family. The army of the Danube, 250,000 strong, was placed under the Grand Duke Nicholas, with a Polish officer, General Levitski, as Chief of the Staff. The Grand Duke Michael, assisted by General Loris Melikov, an officer of Armenian origin, led 60,000 men into Asiatic Turkey.

The campaign opened by the advance of the latter force in four columns. Its right wing moved along the Black Sea coast on Batum. The left wing occupied Bayazid without resistance (April 30). The other columns attacked Ardahan, which fell

after twelve days' siege, and marched against Erzerum, the capital of Armenia. Mukhtar Pasha's forces were too weak to resist the combined movement, and he retired to Zevin, a point between Erzerum and Kars, to await reinforcements. Here he repulsed Melikov, who attempted to force the position, with heavy loss (July 26). The Turks now took the offensive, raised the blockade of Kars, and drove the invaders across the frontier, leaving only Ardahan and Bayazid in their possession. On May 24 the Danubian army crossed the Pruth and spread over Rumania; the Tsar, who accompanied it, establishing his head-quarters at Ploesti, north of Bucharest. The Grand Duke Nicholas on April 27 crossed the Danube at Simnizza, opposite the Turkish citadel of Sistova. His leading division under General Gurko pressed forward into Bulgaria, seizing its ancient capital Tirnova. Then the Balkans were assailed, the Hankoi Pass was forced, and the Turkish position in the Shipka Pass was captured. On July 19 Gurko's division swarmed into Rumelia. The right wing under General Krüdener took Nikopoli after a desperate struggle (July 16), capturing 6000 men and 40 guns, and established himself on the river Vid commanding Sofia. During this rapid advance the Russian left flank was protected by the Grand Duke Nicholas, who operated on the rivers Yantra and Lom, masking the Turkish Quadrilateral (Ruschuk, Shumla, Silistria, and Varna). In three months the Danube and Balkans were traversed, and Adrianople and Constantinople lay open to the invaders.

Suddenly a halt was called in their impetuous career. Suleiman Pasha hurried from Montenegro with 35,000 excellent troops to bar the road to Constantinople. After five days of desperate fighting Gurko was ejected from Rumelia, his secondary position in the Balkans was forced, and he was besieged in Fort Nicholas commanding the Shipka Pass (July 30—Aug. 11). Suleiman Pasha assailed it again and again, but was beaten off with terrible bloodshed. Gurko was at length reinforced by a division under General Radetzki,

and Suleiman driven back to the village of Shipka (Aug. 21). At the same time Osman Pasha advanced by forced marches from Widin, drove the Russians back, and occupied a strong position at Plevna, which he protected by formidable earthworks. This improvised citadel was attacked by General Krüdener on July 20, but the Russians were repulsed with severe losses; and a second effort made ten days later was equally unsuccessful. Their left wing under the Grand Duke Nicholas was now in a precarious plight. Mehemet Ali, a Turkish general of Prussian origin, advanced against him from Ruschuk, and after twelve days' incessant fighting drove him from his position on the Lom to one protected by the Yantra. Had Suleiman Pasha joined hands with his victorious colleague the tide of invasion would have been rolled back to the Danube. He wasted his strength in futile attempts to oust the Russians from their point of vantage in the Shipka; and an opportunity was lost which never recurred. But the Tsar's prospects were by no means enviable. Hemmed in between the Balkans, Plevna, and the Yantra river, with the Turkish Quadrilateral and the Danube in their rear, his armies were themselves besieged. Gigantic efforts were called for in Europe and Asia alike. 50,000 fresh troops were hurried to the relief of Melikov, who was struggling in Anatolia against immense odds. The right wing of the Danubian army was strengthened by a fusilier brigade and two infantry divisions. Prince Charles of Rumania responded to the Grand Duke Nicholas's urgent appeals for help by declaring war with Turkey, and joining the Russian forces before Plevna with 25,000 splendid troops (Aug. 31).

On September 3 Prince Immeritinski captured Lovcha, a strong Turkish position on the lines of communication with the Balkans; and eight days later a third attack was delivered on Plevna. It was watched by Alexander II, who saw the dense masses of Russians and Rumanians recoil before a terrible rifle-fire from three tiers of entrenchments. The Grivitsa redoubt, which was the key of the Turkish defences,

was captured by his allies, who bayoneted the garrison. But it was soon retaken, and the assailants returned sullenly to their lines with a loss of 18,500 killed and wounded. It was high time to renounce the heroic folly which had cost 30,000 lives. Alexander shifted his head-quarters from Biela to the wretched village of Gorni Studen, 18 miles south of Sistova; and three grenadier divisions were mobilised, two of which went to reinforce the Danubian army. Hitherto the Turks had enjoyed free communications with Rumelia and Constantinople. By Levitski's advice the siege of Plevna was converted into a blockade, and General Todleben of Crimean fame was appointed Chief of the Grand Duke's Staff (Sep. 28). In furtherance of the new plan of campaign Gurko occupied the left bank of the Vid, cutting off Plevna from Sofia, and seized all the Balkan defiles by which succour could reach the beleaguered garrison. Mehemet Ali was foiled near Biela in an attempt to relieve Plevna, and was forced to yield his command to the incompetent Suleiman Pasha. On November 9 the youthful General Skobelev, who afterwards won glory in Central Asia, drew the net more tightly by capturing a strong position on the Green Mountain. Before mid-November Plevna was completely invested by 120,000 men. The circuit of the Russian works was nearly thirty miles.

Things at length took a more favourable turn in Armenia. The Grand Duke Michael and General Melikov were defeated by Mukhtar Pasha near Kars on October 2, but on the 14th they beat him in a pitched battle at Alaja Dagh. The Turks lost 10,000 men and were driven into Erzerum. Mukhtar Pasha was again assailed in the defiles of Devi Boyun, commanding the old capital, by Heimann and Tergukasov, and compelled to retreat into the city with heavy loss. On November 18, 1877, Kars was stormed at a cost of 2,500 killed and wounded. The losses of the garrison were nearly twice as heavy; and 10,000 prisoners with 300 cannon fell into Russia's hands. The Turkish army of Anatolia ceased to exist. Ere

long the tide of victory ran as high in Europe. On December 4, indeed, Elena was captured by Mehemet Ali, who menaced the Russian communications with the Balkans. At a critical moment he was deprived of his command by intrigues at Constantinople; and the Turks made no further efforts to molest the Grand Duke's position on the Lom and Yantra.

On December 9, Osman Pasha was driven by starvation to break out of Plevna. He pierced the first line of Russian trenches, but was stopped by the tenacity of a Guards' battalion: and the arrival of reinforcements from the investing lines compelled him to surrender without conditions (Dec. 10, 1877). The improvised fortress which had held out so gloriously for nearly five months was captured, with 30,000 men and 100 guns. The defender of Plevna was himself wounded; and in recognition of his heroism the Tsar returned his sword, giving him permission to wear it even in Russia.

The fall of Plevna spread consternation over Europe, but a Turkish appeal to the great Powers for mediation was rejected by all. On Dec. 12 Servia declared war on Turkey, and joined forces with Montenegro, which had maintained a gallant struggle throughout. The capture of Plevna freed large masses of Russian troops from inaction: and in spite of the approach of winter the Grand Duke resolved to resume his advance on Constantinople. The entire army swung round on its left flank resting on Ruschuk. Two strong columns under Skobelev and Prince Mirski moved on the Shipka Pass to relieve Radetzki, who was struggling against incessant attacks by Wessel Pasha, Suleiman's successor in the Balkan command. Gurko, commanding the Russian right, crossed the Balkans at Etropol after a gigantic struggle with glacial cold, precipices, and deep snow. He turned the enemy's position at Arab Koniak and attacked Sofia. The Turkish retreat was most gallantly covered by Baker Pasha, an English soldier of fortune; but he was unable to save Sofia. It fell into Gurko's hands on January 3, 1878; and a junction with the Servian army was

effected. Then Gurko swung sharply eastwards, defeated the intrepid Fuad Pasha at Kadikoi, and captured Philippopolis, driving Suleiman, now Commander-in-Chief in Rumelia, towards the sea. While Gurko was sweeping all before him, a terrific contest raged on the left flank of the advance. The plan of operations was daring in the extreme. Radetzki was to engage Wessel Pasha's attention in the Shipka Pass by an attack in force, while columns led by Prince Mirski and Skobelev were to turn the Turkish position on the east and west, joining hands on the southern slopes of the Balkans. It was highly improbable that the forces, not in touch, would cross the snow-clad passes without molestation and meet at a given hour. Moreover, the object of the combined movement was well-nigh defeated by Skobelev's procrastination. Mirski was hard pressed by an overwhelming force; but, when all seemed lost, he heard the thunder of Skobelev's guns. Radetzki delivered his frontal attack, and Wessel Pasha, completely surrounded, yielded at discretion. The battle of Senova (Jan. 9, 1878) gave Russia 27,000 prisoners and 43 Krupp guns, and entirely broke the foe's resistance. Its hero was the youthful general Skobelev, whose fiery genius afterwards won immortality in Central Asia. He was adored by his troops as the God of War, but was theatrical and utterly devoid of scruple. Rightly or wrongly he is charged with having purposely delayed an advance against Wessel Pasha in order to reap all the glory for himself. His early death in 1882 was certainly not an unmingled misfortune for his country.

The Russians established themselves at Kazanlik in Rumelia: and Skobelev led the vanguard against Adrianople while other columns drove the remains of Suleiman's army into the Rhodope range. On January 20 Adrianople succumbed without resistance, and became the Grand Duke Nicholas's head-quarters, while Skobelev pressed on to Constantinople. On January 23, 1878, he reached the Sea of Marmora. Constantinople's domes and minarets came into

view; and the only barrier in his path was a force of 12,000 Turks entrenched on Chatalja heights. Abdul Hamid in despair implored the great Powers to intervene; and on meeting with cold refusals from Austria-Hungary, Germany, France, and Italy, he appealed to Great Britain. Her ambassador sounded Gorchakov as to terms of peace, and learnt that Turkey must treat directly with the Grand Duke. At his advice the Sultan despatched plenipotentiaries to Adrianople, and an armistice was signed preliminary to negotiations.

When the news reached England that Constantinople lay at Russia's mercy a feeling was produced akin to consternation. Parliament was summoned in hot haste, and the Conservative Ministry obtained a war vote of £6,000,000 as a preliminary to a conference on the Eastern Question. On February 13, 1878, the British squadron moved from Besika Bay, and, passing the Dardanelles without obtaining the Sultan's permission, anchored at Prince's Islands, within sight of the Turkish capital. This step was an infraction of the Treaty of Paris, and it elicited a protest from the Porte. Gorchakov, too, announced that it freed Russia from all pledges given to England; and that the former would find it necessary to occupy Constantinople for the protection of the Christian residents. The tone of the English Cabinet became daily more uncompromising. It was purged of an element of indecision by the resignations of Lords Carnarvon and Derby; and the Marquis of Salisbury became Secretary for Foreign Affairs (March 28). Russia was informed that the measure contemplated by her would compel Great Britain to refuse participation in the projected conference. Gorchakov's rejoinder again referred to the unauthorised passage of the Dardanelles. "Let Great Britain," he wrote, "take such course as she pleases. History, and possibly her contemporaries, will pass their verdict on this defiance of logic and contempt for the world's peace!" At the same time Alexander II informed Abdul Hamid by an autograph letter that a desire to maintain order laid him

under the necessity of occupying Constantinople. The Sultan implored Queen Victoria to remove her squadron from Prince's Islands; and Admiral Hornby received orders to transfer his ironclads to the Asiatic shore of the Dardanelles.

During this passage of arms the Russian forces were concentrating on Constantinople. On February 24, 1878, the main body came in sight of the beautiful city bathed in sunshine. It inspired the war-worn troops with rapture. For centuries a belief had been current throughout the empire that one day "Tsargrad" would be restored to the Christian fold; and that the desecrated cathedral of St Sophia would again re-echo the sweet, plaintive melodies of the Greek ritual. The invaders with one accord fell upon their knees, and embraced each other with fervent enthusiasm. A show of force compelled the Turks to disarm and abandon their defences at Chatalja; and the Russian head-quarters were established at San Stefano, a western suburb of Constantinople. Alexander gave his brother a free hand as to the occupation of Buyukdere, which commands the Bosphorus. But the Grand Duke's resolution failed him, and he delayed until the approach of the British ironclads rendered the step impracticable. He hoped to secure the needful concessions by diplomacy; and for a moment his timidity seemed to be justified by events.

An armistice had been signed at Adrianople on January 31; and peace negotiations begun there were brought to an issue at San Stefano on March 3, 1878. The treaty extorted by Ignatiev and Nelidov from their Turkish colleagues was all that the most ardent Slavophil could desire. Servia obtained a large increase of territory. Rumania became independent; but was forced to surrender to Russia the portion of Bessarabia annexed to Moldavia by the Treaty of Paris, receiving in exchange the Dobrudja, a marshy tract at the embouchure of the Danube. The territory of Montenegro was doubled, and she obtained five Turkish fortresses, with two ports on



the Adriatic. The greater part of European Turkey was formed into an autonomous tributary principality, called Bulgaria, which stretched from the Danube to the Ægean, and from the Black Sea to the Albanian frontier (see map); Russia reserving for herself the occupation of the chief strategic points. Bosnia and Herzegovina were to be autonomous States, and therefore subject to Slav influences. Of all his European possessions the Sultan retained only a narrow strip, including three cities—Constantinople, Adrianople, and Salonika, with communication only by sea. The Russian gain in Asia was on an equal scale. Turkey agreed to pay a war indemnity of £14,100,000, of which £11,000,000 were to be set off against the cession of Kars, Batum, Ardahan, and Bayazid.

This agreement defeated its object by the excessive stringency of its conditions. Throughout Russia it was hailed with delirious joy; and a high mass was celebrated in its honour before the troops massed at San Stefano. But the Sultan's diplomacy is the astutest in Europe; and his plenipotentiaries who signed the Treaty of San Stefano did so with the full knowledge that the other great Powers would never permit Russia to reap such immense advantages from the war. Protests, indeed, poured in from every side. Austria-Hungary took her stand on the preliminary agreement arrived at with Russia, claiming Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the right to make her voice heard in any final settlement between Russia and Turkey. If these points were conceded she would support the Tsar at a European Congress, which might, she suggested, meet at Vienna. Otherwise she would come to terms with England. Gorchakov assented in principle to a Congress, but was averse to its assembling at Vienna. Thereupon Count Andrassy obtained a war credit of £6,000,000 from the Chambers, and concluded a secret agreement with Great Britain for the maintenance of the Ottoman Empire. That country spoke with no uncertain voice. Lord Salisbury issued a circular to his representatives at foreign Courts

protesting against the extension of Russian control over a sphere in which English interests were paramount. His reply to Gorchakov's despatches was peremptory. Great Britain would never consent to an occupation of Constantinople by Russia ; nor would any modifications in existing treaties be recognised until they had received the consent of the great Powers (April 2). A touch of genius led the Premier, Lord Beaconsfield, to point his moral by displaying the resources at his country's command. Indian troops were summoned to garrison Malta, and the reserves were called out (April 17). Gorchakov was as supple as was his wont when England was concerned. He assured the Foreign Minister, Lord Salisbury, that the Treaty was but a preliminary to a Congress; and that questions affecting the European equilibrium would be decided by the Powers.

The dissatisfaction evoked by San Stefano spread to the Balkan States. Rumania was deeply aggrieved by the manner in which Russia requited her effectual help at Plevna ; but Prince Charles's protest against the retrocession of Bessarabia was met by an assurance that such was the Tsar's will, and a threat to occupy his territory. The Rumanian army was thereupon massed on the Carpathian frontier, ready to act in concert with that of Austria-Hungary. The Albanians formed a league to prevent any cession of their soil to Montenegro ; and bloodshed followed in Bosnia and the Greek provinces. The Sultan's attitude betrayed his readiness to join the concert against Russia. He rejected the Grand Duke's request for leave to garrison Buyukdere, concentrated 180,000 troops for the defence of his capital, and raised formidable earth-works within 2,000 yards of the Russian camp. Everything pointed to a struggle with England, Austria-Hungary, Rumania, and Turkey ; and Russia made all preparations in her power to meet this terrible contingency. Troops were massed on the Galician frontier. A volunteer fleet was created by public subscription, and five speedy cruisers were fitted out to prey

on British commerce. But the Tsar was too conscious of his weakness to push matters to an extremity. The war had cost him 90,000 lives and an expenditure of £120,000,000. His army, which clung to the outskirts of Constantinople, was in a precarious plight. Their land communications were menaced by Austria-Hungary and Rumania, while the British fleet would close the Black Sea to reinforcements and supplies. Moreover the chaos in the Russian camp boded speedy disaster. The Grand Duke Nicholas was an excellent peace general and the idol of his troops, but he was unable to enforce sanitation or discipline. San Stefano was a charnel-house, and many of the regiments had a third of their strength in hospital, struck down by typhus. On April 30 Alexander reluctantly superseded his brother by Todleben, the hero of Sebastopol, who speedily restored order to the Russian lines. The two armies faced each other in breathless expectation.

Gorchakov sought to solve the deadlock by detaching the Powers arrayed against his country. Believing that Austria-Hungary offered the weakest point of resistance, he tried to disarm her by offering the bait of southern Herzegovina. This concession failed to satisfy Count Andrassy; and Russian overtures to Germany were equally unsuccessful. Bismarck refused to put pressure on Austria-Hungary, and would promise no more than neutrality in case of a conflict with that Power. The diplomatic crisis produced its man in Count Shuvalov, ambassador to the Court of St James. His tact suggested the scheme of a preliminary agreement with England which might preserve most of the essential gains of San Stefano. Negotiations were conducted with the utmost secrecy between Shuvalov and Lord Salisbury, which ended in the latter's consenting to the surrender of Kars and Batum, provided that Russia conceded the division of Bulgaria into two autonomous states. Having gained this important point, Shuvalov travelled to St Petersburg in order to convince his master. Lord Salisbury's complaisance caused amazement there; and

Alexander II at first declined to believe that England would acquiesce in his retaining the keys of Armenia. He was ready to yield much in return. On May 15, 1878, a secret convention was signed by Russia and Great Britain which settled the future of Bulgaria in terms afterwards ratified by Europe, and placed the execution of the Sultan's pledges to his Christian subjects in the care of the great Powers. England assented "with deep regret" to the retrocession of southern Bessarabia; and while she recognised the acquisition of Kars and Batum, she laid stress on Russia's promise to seek no further gains in Asiatic Turkey. The preservation of the *status quo* in those territories was believed essential to the safety of British India. The same notion prompted a secret convention entered into between England and Turkey on June 4, 1878, in which the former guaranteed the integrity of the Porte's Asiatic dominions in return for the right to occupy the island of Cyprus.

On learning that the Powers most deeply interested in the Eastern Question had come to terms, Prince Bismarck did his utmost to obtain the sanction of Europe to the settlement arrived at. His offer of Berlin as a meeting-place of the proposed Congress was accepted; and its sessions opened on June 13. Bismarck himself was President; Russia being represented by the veteran Gorchakov, and Great Britain by Lords Salisbury and Beaconsfield. The Eastern imbroglio in all its bearings was discussed at twenty sittings of the Congress; and an understanding was arrived at on July 13, 1878. At the instant when the plenipotentiaries were about to sign the Treaty of Berlin those of England revealed the existence of the Convention with Turkey.

The treaty of Berlin made Bulgaria north of the Balkans an autonomous State tributary to the Sultan. Its prince was to be elected by a popular assembly; but their choice was made subject to the suzerain's ratification and that of the great Powers. Russia's occupation was extended to nine months.

Bulgarian territory south of the mountain barrier became "Eastern Rumelia," a self-governing Turkish province under a Christian Governor-General appointed by the Sultan with the Powers' sanction. The south-western, or Macedonian portion of the "Larger Bulgaria" contemplated by the Treaty of San Stefano was restored to Turkey, to form a focus of future disturbance and a source of danger to Europe. Austria-Hungary obtained the right of occupying Bosnia and Herzegovina, and garrisoning Novi Bazar. Montenegro was declared independent of Turkey, with an accession of territory at the expense of Herzegovina and Albania, much below the scale contemplated by the Treaty of San Stefano. Prince Nicholas obtained an outlet to the Adriatic in Antivari, but his mercantile flag was guaranteed by Austria-Hungary. Servia, too, became independent with a frontier extended south-eastwards. Rumanian independence had been fairly won, and it was recognised by the Powers. But Rumania was compelled to surrender to Russia the portion of Bessarabia acquired under the Treaty of Paris (1856). By way of compensation she received the Dobrudja, a fertile but unhealthy tract at the mouth of the Danube; and protested with justice against the enforced exchange. In Armenia Turkey ceded Kars, Ardahan, and Batum; and Russia undertook to constitute the last a free port. The Turkish fortresses on the lower Danube were to be destroyed, and that portion of the great highway was placed under a European Commission. Lastly, the Porte undertook to remodel its legal procedure and to grant religious liberty in the dominions left under its sway.

The Treaty of Berlin gave Russia but a poor return for the enormous sacrifices entailed by the war. She had hoped to fashion a powerful lever on the Balkans; but Bulgaria, the Slav state destined to serve her designs, was reduced to impotence. Her allies, Servia and Montenegro, were kept apart. Austria-Hungary, without firing a shot, gained two provinces with a large Slav population, and a footing in the debateable

land which neutralised that of Russia. Great Britain secured, by a doubtful stroke of policy, a naval base in the eastern Mediterranean, coupled, however, with a pledge which it might prove difficult to fulfil.

In the following month began the evacuation of the Balkan States by Russia, but it was not completed till January 1879, owing to the Turkish delays in signing the treaty of peace. Years elapsed ere full effect was given to the decision of the Congress. Austria-Hungary encountered fierce resistance from the Musulmans of Bosnia; and the guerilla warfare lasted till October 1882. Greece remained in a ferment for many months, for the Sultan was loath to comply with a simple monition given at Berlin. On the initiative of England two conferences assembled in July 1880 and March 1881, which compelled the surrender to Greece of Thessaly and a part of Epirus (July 6, 1881). Ottoman tergiversation was even more persistent in Montenegro. An Albanian league was formed to prevent the little state from taking possession of her gains; and a collective naval demonstration by the great Powers took place ere Turkey yielded territories which Prince Nicholas agreed to accept in lieu of those secured at Berlin. In Bulgaria Prince Dondukov-Korsakov, head of the Russian administrative Commission, convoked an assembly of notables (*Sobranié*) on Feb. 22, 1879, which sanctioned a constitution; and in April following it again met to elect a Sovereign. The choice fell on Prince Alexander of Battenberg, a scion of the House of Hesse-Darmstadt and nephew of the Russian Empress, who had fought with the Servian army against the Turks. Having sworn to observe the constitution, he took formal possession of his new capital, Sofia, in July 1879. Thus Russia saw the Christians of the Balkan peninsula relieved of an intolerable yoke, and those still under Turkish sway vouchsafed a greater measure of religious liberty. Such were the fruits of her sacrifice and her forced cooperation with Europe.

A profound impression was made in Russia by the issue of this inglorious campaign. Slavs are prone to violent revulsion of sentiment. They had predicted an easy triumph for the national cause. The blind instinct which impels them to seek warmer climes and ports unblocked by ice was gratified by the belief that Constantinople would be secured to Russia. The religious feeling which is her most vital force hoped to see the cradle of orthodoxy restored to its ancient faith. Despair came with the reverses attending the advance on the Balkans, and indignation was excited by the manœuvres of a gang of harpies who robbed and starved the troops on a pretence of supplying them with food. When Todleben, Skobelev, Melikov, and Gurko retrieved the blundering of the earlier operations, men took heart of grace; but their hopes were again dashed by the tidings that diplomacy had wrested the fruits of victory from Russia's grasp. The government was publicly accused of yielding to empty threats from England and Austria-Hungary; and the universal disappointment was shown in the frigid reception accorded to troops returning from the seat of war in the autumn of 1880.

Alexander II sought to stifle these murmurs by dissolving all Slavophil committees. He succeeded only in alienating forces which had hitherto been a pillar of autocracy, and arraying against it two factions whose views had been diametrically opposed.

Nihilism found an ever-widening field for its propaganda during the initial phases of the war. On a July night of 1877, while Russia's heart was wrung by the ignominy of failure before Plevna, fifteen young men met in a forest near Lipetsk in the Tambov Government and formed a conspiracy whose watchword was war to the knife with all existing institutions. Its organs, *Popular Will* and *Black Partition*, passed from hand to hand, preaching assassination as a legitimate weapon of offence. This little band was swelled by accessions from the student class. Contributions poured into its treasury: young girls

sacrificed their dowries, wealthier adherents gave largely of their means. Their manœuvres were watched with poignant anxiety by the third section of the Secret Police, who, in October 1877, laid hands on 253 Nihilists. The trial dragged on for four months, and ended in the conviction of 160 accused. Their punishment did not stay the movement. In Feb. 1878, newspapers of all shades of opinion accused General Trepov, Governor of St Petersburg, of cruelty towards a political prisoner. A young woman named Vera Zasulich sought Charlotte Corday's cloak of martyrdom by firing a pistol at the alleged oppressor. Her acquittal by the jury raised the hopes of the Nihilists. They established a secret tribunal, styled the "Executive Committee," which singled out the objects of assassination and often warned them that their time had come. Five days after Vera Zasulich's acquittal (April 12) the Rector of Kiev University was desperately wounded on the staircase of his head-quarters, and soon afterwards a police-officer was stabbed in public. On August 15, 1878, General Mezensov, Chief of the Third Section of police, was slain near the Grand Duke Michael's palace at St Petersburg. Vainly did a ukase ordain that political crimes should thenceforward be tried by a military commission. This supersession of legal procedure only added to the isolation of Government, and left unbiassed public feeling neutral in the face of revolution. On February 22, 1879, Prince D. Krapotkin, Governor of Kharkov, was shot by a masked assassin while returning from a ball; his death sentence was placarded in every city of the Empire. On March 7 Colonel Knoop, of the Odessa police, was killed in his own house; a written judgment of the Executive Committee was found by his side. An attack was made a few days later on General Drenteln, successor of the slaughtered Mezensov. This long series of outrages culminated on April 14 in an attempt on the sacred person of the Tsar. A schoolmaster named A. Soloviev emptied a revolver at him near the Winter Palace. During all these months of national



agony incendiaries were active at Moscow, Nijni-Novogorod, Perm, and in Western Siberia; and riots took place at Rostov which were suppressed by military force. Seized by panic, the Government proclaimed martial law in the affected tracts, and gave absolute powers to the governors of Moscow, Warsaw, and Kiev (April 17). The character of the agents selected to meet the crisis revealed its gravity: for Todleben, Gurko, and Melikov were called upon to fight enemies more deadly than those whom they had conquered in open warfare. Executions, banishments, and imprisonments were multiplied without avail. At St Petersburg the duty of watching over the public peace was imposed on the house porters, who were forbidden to leave their posts during the long winter nights.

Whether they were intimidated by these measures or felt the necessity of framing a more subtle plan of campaign, the Nihilists desisted for a while from their desperate undertaking. But on Dec. 1, 1879, the imperial train was wrecked, at the instant of its arrival at Moscow from Livadia, by a hidden mine placed between the rails. Alexander II escaped only because he had reached the old capital a short time earlier. Three days afterwards the Executive Committee issued a proclamation justifying the attempt, and announcing that the Tsar was doomed. In spite of minute precautions a second effort was made to execute its sentence on Feb. 17, 1880. As the imperial family were about to enter their dining-room at the Winter Palace, an explosion of dynamite took place in the guard-room beneath. The intended victims again had a hair-breadth escape: but the roll of killed and wounded among the unfortunate soldiers was appalling. By this time St Petersburg was in the grip of a reign of terror. A ukase of Feb. 24, 1880, suppressed the provincial government and placed it under Loris Melikov, who presided over an Executive Commission with dictatorial powers. Eight days later his life was attempted by a converted Jew, who was taken and hanged on the morrow after warning the general that he was a doomed man. At this

moment the conspirators showed a disposition to treat with the power which they had defied. A proclamation was posted at St Petersburg announcing that the Executive Committee would desist from the struggle provided that the Tsar would delegate his authority to the people ; and "leave the task of founding social reforms to an assembly representing the entire Russian nation."

General Melikov, like the majority of the Armenian race, was supple, intriguing and ambitious. He longed to pose as a great reformer, and limit the sphere of discontent by timely concessions. Repressive measures imposed by panic are never wisely conceived ; and those provoked by Nihilism had been both hurried and sweeping. Melikov persuaded his master to release a host of prisoners who had been deported to Siberia without trial, or languished in dungeons uncondemned : 2,000 students expelled from the Universities for complicity with the movement were readmitted, and their scholarships restored. In state trials for Nihilism at St Petersburg and Kiev the death sentence was commuted ; and out of 16 who were convicted of participation in the plot to blow up the Winter Palace two only suffered the extreme penalty. So good was the effect of the experiment that a ukase of August 18, 1880, annulled the drastic measures of Feb. 24. Melikov became Minister of the Interior, and a tentative return was made to civil government. Encouraged by his apparent success, the general gradually inoculated his master with the idea of granting a constitution. He held that the battle against anarchy could be won only by enlisting the good-will of the Russian people. The Nihilists were an infinitesimal minority ; in point of fact their number never exceeded ten thousand. The most absolute government in the world had been checkmated by an inner ring who, in Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu's words, had "made a pact with death." Their strength lay in the national discontent. After all, the liberal party demanded no more than the most elementary safeguards for person and property, the discontinuance of banishment to Siberia by executive order, the

substitution of law for the arbitrary will of police officials. They would be content with a measure of participation in the government of their country. If this boon were granted them, Alexander II would reconquer that love which he had won by his earlier reforms, and the handful of Nihilists would be disarmed.

Such were Melikov's arguments; and his influence grew daily more pronounced, owing to the support given him by Princess Jurievski, with whom Alexander had contracted a morganatic marriage after the Empress's death in June, 1880. In the succeeding February he laid before his master a scheme which he believed would restore the empire's life to its normal currents. The first step contemplated was an exhaustive enquiry, carried out by the Senate, as to the people's needs and the results of existing legislation in every district of the empire. A special commission was then to be appointed in each state-department, charged with the duty of preparing a project of reform based on the Senate's investigations. The commissions' reports would be discussed by a representative council, elected by the autonomous bodies already in being—noble assemblies, zemstvos, and municipalities; but the final word would rest with the Tsar. Alexander's knowledge of history suggested a parallel between this embryo parliament and the French Assembly of Notables, which led up to the fateful States General. But he yielded to the entreaties of his doctrinaire minister, and laid the project before the Council of State. It received enthusiastic support from a majority of that body; and after some weeks' delay the Tsar gave it his approval in the form of a rescript, addressed to the Minister of the Interior. Then hesitation surged up in his overstrained mind; and he postponed the publication of the edict until March 12, 1881.

On that date Alexander's doubts increased; but on the 13th he directed the publication of Melikov's scheme in the official organ. The same afternoon he was returning from his customary drive, escorted by a sotnia of Cossacks. His carriage was passing

between the western side of Michael's Garden and the Catherine Canal, when a bombshell was hurled beneath it by a Nihilist named Rissakov. The missile burst, wrecking the carriage and working havoc among the guards and bystanders. Alexander was unharmed ; and his first thought was for the sufferers. He was hurrying to their assistance when a second bomb exploded close to his person, inflicting ghastly injuries. He regained consciousness for an instant, while his attendants were bearing him to the Winter Palace, but expired at 3.30 p.m. on March 13, 1881, without uttering a word.

The visitor, bewildered by the splendours of an endless succession of State apartments, is profoundly touched by the contrast presented by the room which witnessed the last scene of this awful tragedy. Filial piety has preserved the minutest surroundings precisely as they were when Alexander went forth to die ; and they suggest the library of an English country-house rather than the chosen abode of the Russian Tsar. The portraits which cover the wall and writing-table, the row of tiny frocks laid out for a father's contemplation, reveal the strength of the lonely, harassed autocrat's affections. On one side, screened from the space devoted by Alexander II to study and private audiences, stands the little camp-bed whereon he slept in life, and the dark stain is still there which was left by his shattered body.

Thus perished the Tsar Liberator, because he was unable to combat revolution by bringing other forces still more potent into play. His fate is a lesson to monarchs who are apt to forget that unbending persistence in a course once entered upon is not less essential to success than purity of aim and unselfish regard for their subjects' welfare. Every government which is in advance of its people's development must, indeed, strive to raise the masses to its own level. Until that consummation be reached it should direct rather than follow the trend of public opinion. Its policy must be shaped, not on abstract ideas or vague aspirations, but on the interests of the State, the bent of national genius and history.

## CHAPTER VII.

### THE TRIUMPH OF THE OLD-RUSSIAN PARTY.

ALEXANDER III. 1881-1894.

EVERY Tsar during the nineteenth century had commenced his reign at a period of dire peril to the institutions which he represented. Alexander III was no exception to the rule when, at the age of 36, he succeeded to the throne vacated by his murdered father. Never did Russia stand in sorer need of a vigorous and far-seeing ruler—not even on that dark December day when her fate trembled in the balance. For three years nearly every province and city had been the theatre of outrages perpetrated against authority. The framework of society was shaken to its foundations. On one side stood the Government, driven to its last entrenchments and powerless against the revolutionary storm: on the other a band of fanatics who counted death a martyrdom. During this appalling conflict the Russian people stood bewildered, and the universal anarchy was reflected in the helplessness and vacillation displayed by officials of every degree.

That the new Tsar should have been equal to the crisis proves the strength of inherited aptitude for rule; for he had not enjoyed the special training which falls to the lot of an Heir Apparent. His elder brother, the Tsarevich Nicholas, died in early manhood of pulmonary consumption in 1865.

The Grand Duke Alexander's education rested on a military basis; and the vague liberalism implanted in his father and grand-uncle was wanting in his case. M. Pobiedonostsev, the tutor who had the largest share in forming his character, was the antithesis of Laharpe and Jukovski. Under his guidance Alexander gained an intimate knowledge of the history of Russia and the forces which had evolved her people's genius. He became profoundly religious, and was imbued with a sense of his responsibilities. Thus his instincts were absolutist; but inborn good sense told him that he must yield to the spirit of the age. Grave, reserved, tenacious of friendships and hatred, he was ever loyal to his plighted word. This steadfast soul inhabited a frame which was cast in a gigantic mould, and endowed with strength far exceeding that of ordinary men. In private life, as in political ideals, he resembled Nicholas I. At 21 he married the Princess Dagmar of Denmark, to whom the Tsarevich Nicholas had been betrothed, the bride taking the name of Maria Feodorovna. In charm of manner she resembles her sister, the Queen of England; and a strong, enthusiastic nature rendered her a fitting helpmeet for one on whom so heavy a burden was laid. Alexander III was a devoted husband and father, who sought happiness only in indulging his deep family affection.

The manifesto which he issued on his accession struck the keynote of his reign. It proclaimed the unity of Russia, the strength of the ties uniting Poland and Finland with the Empire. A second utterance invoked the affection for their "Little Father," felt by the vast bulk of his subjects. It reminded the peasantry of the freedom given them in 1861, and ordered them to swear allegiance to the Tsar and the Heir Apparent. His next thought was for the complicated ills under which the Empire laboured. Filial instinct led him to respect the last wishes of Alexander II. When Melikov laid before him the vast project of reform which had so nearly passed into law he said, "Change nothing in my father's

orders: they are his last will and testament." On March 20, 1881, the Council of State was summoned to discuss them. A majority of those present gave their hearty approval to the scheme, but Count Strogonov raised his voice in protest. He insisted that the measure was inopportune. A time when rebellion was rampant and its secret springs obscure was not one for revising fundamental laws and placing the whole administration on its trial. The Tsar's former tutor, Pobiedonostsev, who had become Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod, took the same view. Russia, he said, must look for salvation not to the vapourings of a motley assembly, not to subtle abstractions opposed to the spirit and traditions of her history. It would come only of a close union between the Tsar and his people, based on the solid foundations afforded by national sentiment. Their arguments produced a sudden revulsion of feeling in the Council; and Alexander III after hearing both parties with attention deferred his decision.

While he pondered on this weighty matter he gave his father Alexander II a splendid public funeral, and took steps to bring the assassins to justice. Gelnikov, the actual regicide, perished with his victim, but Rissakov who launched the first bomb had been arrested, and with him five accomplices. All were condemned to death, and, with the exception of a woman who proved to be *enceinte*, they paid the penalty of their crime (April 15). By this time the Tsar's mind was made up on the burning question of reform. He was dissatisfied with the palliatives put forward by the late Minister of the Interior, and resolved to restore confidence by a direct appeal addressed to the nation, which should lay down the immutable principles of his domestic policy. With Pobiedonostsev's aid he drew up a proclamation which was communicated to Counts Strogonov and Adlerberg, and published on May 11, 1881. It began with an allusion to his predecessor's liberation of the serfs and the extension given by him to self-government, and indicated his own resolve to maintain the autocratic power unsullied

by conspiracy or revolution. "Dedicating ourselves," it ran, "to our high functions, we call upon our faithful subjects to serve us and the realm with truth and fidelity; and to strive for the extirpation of the heinous agitation which has disgraced the land, the maintenance of religion and morality, the extinction of greed and falsehood, and the re-establishment of harmonious working in the institutions given to Russia by her great benefactor." These unmistakable utterances made a deep impression on all classes of society. Men felt that pusillanimity and hesitation were at an end: that the helm of State was in vigorous hands.

The new order of things required agents devoted to its governing principles. Loris Melikov resigned the Ministry of the Interior, and was succeeded by the Slavophil Ignatiev, whose manœuvres had produced the last Russo-Turkish War. In the War Department Miliutin gave place to General Vannovski; and M. Bunge took charge of the Ministry of Finance. All were pledged to support the autocracy in its struggle with forces making for chaos. The lessons of the proclamation were enforced by the Tsar during a tour to Moscow, Nijni Novogorod, and the regions of the Volga. He received everywhere touching demonstrations of loyalty and confidence, and returned to St Petersburg with a confirmed belief that the heart of Russia was still sound. But the lurid gospel of anarchy was slow to relax its grasp on the Slav character. At the very outset of the reign the Executive Committee offered peace in return for the creation of a Legislative Assembly elected by universal suffrage; and throughout its course assassinations, murderous outrage, and student riots followed in rapid succession. The sternest repressive measures were adopted. The dreaded Third Section, or secret police, was augmented. At each recurrence of Nihilist manœuvres a state of siege was proclaimed, and the whole machinery of justice was superseded by a military dictatorship. Banishments to Siberia multiplied under a system termed euphemistically "displacement by administrative process"; and



every year saw 10,000 or 12,000 men and women torn from their homes and hurried to Eastern Siberia or the glacial shores of the Pacific. These drastic measures had their effect in disintegrating Nihilism, but the decline in its energy which set in was due to other causes. Punishment alone is powerless to thwart a people's will. It fashions martyrs, and stirs the embers which it seeks to smother. Ideas can be combated by ideas alone. Alexander III set up a conception of national unity, of progressive strength at home and abroad, based on the teachings of Russian history. As years went by this conception gained in strength; and the monstrous doctrines of negation lost ground among classes which once accepted them as gospel. Moreover, the nihilistic belief in the people's inarticulate longings for freedom was belied by actual experience. The peasantry and artisans were deaf to the passionate appeals, and showed scanty gratitude to the cultured youths and maidens who shared their squalid lives and sufferings. Nihilism failed because it never grasped the fact that a revolution is accomplished in the body politic only when it has sunk deep into the mind of the individual. In Russia, devotion for the person of the Tsar and regard for religious sanctions are too deeply ingrained to be ousted by principles from which reason recoils in horror. Once more was the autocracy placed on its trial, and again it emerged triumphant.

The new theory of government was less successful when it came into collision with another social force. Russia, rather than Palestine, is the Jewry of the modern world; for of the six and a half millions of the Chosen People four-fifths are to be found within that empire. They had been long restricted to Poland and fifteen provinces in the south-west, known officially as the Jewish Territory, embracing an area of 356,581 square miles. This would, at first blush, appear to offer ample scope to all. But, as a matter of fact, Israelites seldom engage in agriculture. The vast majority are small traders and bankers. They cling to the sparsely scattered towns; and much misery

prevails in the ghettos to which they are confined. In April, 1881, an anti-Semite agitation began in Germany, where a league was formed to agitate for restrictions on the liberty enjoyed by Jews. The movement spread to Russia; for the Jews are detested because they succeed where natives fail. In the month of May, Podolia, Kiev, and southern Russia were the scene of anti-Jewish riots; and pillage was the order of the day. The officials regarded these outrages with a feeling akin to complacency, and their attitude received some countenance from that of the supreme Government. The feelings entertained by Alexander III towards his Jewish subjects were prompted by the Slavophiles Pobiedonostsev and Ignatiev. His deep attachment to the Greek Church was shocked by the existence of millions who condemned its dogmas. His conception of the unity of Russia, the symmetry which always appeals to an autocrat, rebelled against their peculiarities of costume and manners, and the clannishness which makes the Hebrew community a State within a State in every land. It must be admitted, too, that Jews were open to the charge of encouraging the *mujik's* deadly vice by their management of the spirit-shops which they controlled.

A ruler who won the proud title of "the Peasants' Tsar" could not regard such a state of things with indifference. Alexander III, therefore, gave a tacit approval to the measures of persecution adopted by Ignatiev in May 1882. Under his father's mild sway the restriction on Jewish residence had been relaxed, and many thousands were living unmolested beyond the pale. They were now torn from their homes, the ties of business, kindred, and friendship, and deported to their birth-places. The cruelty involved was obnoxious to the liberal party which still survived in Russia; and under the sting of foreign criticism the Slavophiles felt that they had gone too far. A truce was called, which lasted for a couple of years; but in 1884 persecution broke out anew. By a series of edicts the Jews of Russia lost nearly every right attaching to citizenship. They

were forbidden to employ Christian servants without special leave; they were excluded from public employment. Limits were placed on the percentage of Hebrew students at the Universities; and this restriction was afterwards extended to secondary schools. Every obsolescent measure tending to depress Jewish life was revived. But the Government shrank from the only radical method of dealing with the problem. Protestantism was practically stamped out in France two centuries back by compulsory emigration and conversion at the sword's point. Such means of crushing religious and political nonconformity were impossible in the nineteenth century; and ages of struggle have rendered Hebrews impervious to half-measures.

Ignatiev's anti-Semitic crusade was an indirect cause of his fall. Wishing to conciliate public opinion by posing as a reformer, he proposed to free the zemstvos from the interference of provincial governors and to extend the system to Siberia and Poland. Then, reverting to the ideas of Melikov, he suggested that the Local Boards should send delegates to an enlarged Council of State possessing a deliberative voice on public affairs. This pendulum-swing towards a policy which the Tsar considered premature inspired him with distrust for its framer. In April 1882 Prince Gorchakov, full of years and honours, surrendered the portfolio of Foreign Affairs. Ignatiev was a candidate for the vacant office. Another candidate was M. de Giers, who had been the aged chancellor's trusted lieutenant; and Alexander's choice fell upon him. The disappointed statesman resigned his post as Minister of the Interior, and was replaced by the reactionary Count D. Tolstoy.

The Tsar's solicitude for the peasantry of Russia was in marked contrast with his feelings towards her Jewish population. In spite of financial straits he carried out a cherished design bequeathed him by Alexander II—the abolition of that last relic of serfdom, the Poll Tax (Jan. 1884). He recast the

legislation of 1861 with the view of remedying the injustices incidental to so vast a measure. It had hitherto been optional with proprietors to permit the redemption of the land allotted to their former serfs. Alexander III made the process obligatory. The price was payable in instalments to the landowner, who was rarely in a position to give credit. Government became paymaster, and recovered the annual quatum from the village communes with the imperial taxes. Acting on the advice of a commission of experts appointed to study the conditions of the agricultural class, Alexander III reduced the annual demand under this head by 12,000,000 roubles, and allotted 5,000,000 in reduction of the yearly dues from overburdened villages. These concessions have almost effaced the difference in the lot of peasants on Crown domains and of those on private estates. In 1930 all payment for land surrendered to the peasants will have been liquidated; and it will then be vested absolutely in the communes.

These measures left a deep-seated evil untouched which will become the gravest social problem of the century. Sooner or later, the rulers of British India must deal with the tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence in tracts of exceptional fertility—the Gangetic Delta for instance. The Russian Government is confronted with very similar conditions in the Black Earth zone, whose northern boundary is a line intersecting the provinces of Perm, Kazan, Nijni-Novogorod, Riyazan, Kaluga, Chernigov, and Volhynia. Its deep, fine-grained soil has an immense capacity for absorbing and retaining the rainfall; and under favourable atmospheric conditions the Black Earth provinces yield fairly good returns without the aid of manure. But these natural advantages are neutralised by a phenomenal growth of population. So fruitful are the Slavs that Russia doubles her number in about half a century. In 1867 her population was 82,180,000, in 1885 it had risen to 108,842,000. The Black Earth zone contributed by far the largest share of this increase of thirty-two per cent.; and in

those provinces the unit assigned for the peasants' support in 1861 was smallest. As years went by, the insufficiency of the allotment became increasingly marked. This was a contingency which the organisers of liberation had not foreseen. The more thrifty peasants were able to purchase or rent additional plots, but the majority became a landless proletariat or flocked into the towns for subsistence. In order to facilitate the purchase of land by communes and individuals, Alexander III founded a system of Peasants' Banks in 1883, which advanced 90 per cent. of the valuations at  $5\frac{1}{4}$  per cent., with a sinking fund providing for gradual liquidation. By the end of the century £20,274,000 had been thus advanced on mortgages, and 11,656,000 acres had passed into the hands of peasants. They were encouraged to supplement their holdings by leasing additional plots. In 1889 no less than 40 per cent. of the area occupied by peasants was held for a term of years. From 1881 dates a series of legislative measures which aim at redistributing the population with some regard for the means of subsistence. The surplus in congested tracts were tempted, by grants held for long periods rent free, to settle in others which were more thinly peopled. In Siberia concessions were made in perpetuity; but the tide of emigration did not set in thither until the trans-continental railway annihilated the huge distances which discouraged the colonist.

These devices were proved to have been inadequate by the succession of famines which commenced in 1891. The measures adopted to combat these calamities were based on Anglo-Indian models, but went further than our administrators in the East are permitted to go by the dictates of political economy. A Central Famine Committee under the presidency of the Tsarevich, with branches in the affected provinces, expended £12,500,000 in judicious relief. At the same time restrictions were imposed on the export of food grain. The development of water and railway communications which marked the closing years of the century affords an automatic check on famines, for prices tend

to a uniform level and the surplus of one province is transferred to meet deficiency in another. But in the reign of Alexander III this function was not fully understood. Between 1879 and 1892 the annual rate of railway construction was but 399 miles, compared with 980 during the previous decade. It is hardly open to question that, in Russia and British India alike, the task of removing the defective economic conditions which lie at the root of famines is wholly beyond the sphere of Government. The remedy rests with the people themselves, and must be sought in the higher standard of comfort and self-respect which accompanies an advance in civilisation.

Another cause of agrarian distress was more susceptible of palliative measures. The Russian peasant is kindly and sociable, but he finds the nights of a northern winter intolerably dreary, and his ignorance cuts him off from all sources of rational amusement. Hence the spirit-shops which were found in every village attracted crowds of customers, and intoxication was the popular ideal of happiness. The attitude of Government towards the liquor-traffic showed more than the usual degree of vacillation. Nicholas I found a state monopoly in the sale of spirits firmly established, and in 1827 he replaced it by the farming system. This had the inherent vice of encouraging the consumption of intoxicants; and in 1863 Alexander II introduced the sounder principle of excise. He threw open the right to manufacture spirits, but it was hedged about with restrictions which favoured concentration in large distilleries. The sale was placed on the same footing as other trades, the natural result being that intoxication increased amazingly. Alexander III regarded the spirit-traffic from a loftier standpoint than as a means of extracting revenue. In May 1885 a law came into force which reduced the number of drinking-dens while it increased taxation on distilleries and wholesale warehouses.

Russia's chief source of wealth is her magnificent forests. Excluding Siberia, she possesses 498,000,000 acres of wood—

nearly seven times the area of the British Isles—of which 206,400,000 are in private hands. At the era of liberation this vast territory was left under the control of landowners, whose impecuniosity suggested the fatal expedient of selling timber which could not be reproduced in a century. Thus many of the southern provinces were denuded of trees; and the climatic conditions sensibly deteriorated. In April 1888 a statute was passed for the protection of the remaining forests, which has been gradually extended to all parts of European Russia except the north, where the supply of timber is practically inexhaustible. This far-seeing measure regulates the conditions under which private persons may fell their trees, with a strict regard for the water supply. In return, landowners are given advice as to utilising their forests, and may obtain seeds and saplings from governmental nurseries. A special Board was created in every province to deal with forestry; and institutes were founded at St Petersburg and Lublin in Poland for training young men in this recondite science. The area under timber in the private domains was placed under stricter control, and Russia is now on a level with her Western neighbours in all that relates to the management of forests. Alexander III evinced a fatherly care for the peasants in his vast private demesne. They were encouraged to breed horses and cattle of superior stamp; to cultivate the more lucrative staples such as cotton, silk, beet-root, and vines; to develop fisheries. Well did he deserve the proud title of the "Peasants' Tsar," by which he is still remembered.

While anxious care was given to his people's material progress, his domestic policy in all that concerned their intellectual and civic life savoured strongly of reaction. Believing that Nihilism found sustenance in the growth of a half-instructed proletariat, the Tsar reverted to his grandfather's views as to the scope of University teaching. Inspectors were appointed, outside the teaching staffs, to maintain discipline; and on their good-will depended the continuance of scholarships in the case

of pauper students. High schools of every grade were closed to the children of servants and working men. In spite of these measures insubordination was nearly as rife as in the preceding reign. In 1882 riots occurred at Kazan and St Petersburg; and two years later the Moscow University was a scene of disorder. During the winter of 1887 the whole student class rose in protest against the stringent discipline enforced. The agitation was ruthlessly suppressed by the closure of all Universities and high schools at St Petersburg, Moscow, Odessa, and other great towns; and the ringleaders were banished to Siberia. Official discouragement had no effect in reducing the crowd who pressed into high schools and Universities. The eight Universities of European Russia were attended by 14,027 students in 1887, as compared with 6,208 a decade earlier. Alexander's attitude towards Secondary Education was less conservative. In higher schools the classical element gave place to the study of living tongues; and the curriculum of those which taught arts and crafts was placed in accord with modern requirements. In 1886 the Empire had 1010 secondary schools of all grades, attended by 230,000 pupils; the statistics of 1876 having shown 198 schools and 50,000 pupils. In popular education the advance was equally notable, although the numbers sink into insignificance when the population of Russia is taken into account. In the middle of this reign the primary schools numbered 39,000, with 2,025,000 children on the rolls.

The public press had become a potent instrument of Nihilism. Its organs, *Land and Liberty*, the *Popular Will*, and other revolutionary prints, enjoyed an almost unfettered circulation under the lax control which marked the previous reign. In 1882 the press-law was more closely assimilated to those regulations by which Napoleon III had sought to muzzle public opinion. After three official warnings a journal was placed under "preventive censure." Each number was then submitted to the controlling authority, and the discovery of any objectionable matter sealed its fate. In all cases editors were compelled to



disclose the authorship of unsigned articles. Suppression, however, was left in the hands of a committee consisting of the Ministers of Justice, the Interior, and Education, with the Procurator of the Holy Synod. Local self-government, as established by Alexander II in 1864, felt the same tendency to centralise and to subordinate every branch of administration to a single will. In February, 1888, Count D. Tolstoy, Minister of the Interior, placed a series of measures with this end in view before the Council of State. Despite the opposition of that body, in which liberal ideals still lingered, these reactionary aims received Alexander's approval, and they survived their framer, who died in May, 1889. The peasants' cantonal tribunals serving as Courts of First Instance were placed under the control of Cantonal Chiefs, selected by the Executive from nominees of provincial Assemblies of Nobles. In twenty provinces of Central Russia the new Cantonal Chiefs replaced elected Judges of the Peace. In every large city, except the two capitals and Odessa, the elected judges were superseded by stipendiary magistrates. The zemstvos, or local boards charged with supervising roads, schools, and hospitals, found their power and resources curtailed, and were subjected to constant interference on the part of provincial governors. Even the favoured *mir*s were placed in leading-strings, Cantonal Chiefs being appointed to control the *volost*, or group of villages, with extensive authority over the *mir* and the peasants whom it represented.

At the close of 1891 the grip of centralisation closed on every province which enjoyed self-government; and the Presidents of Noble Assemblies became, by virtue of their office, chairmen of provincial and district zemstvos. In this step it is easy to trace the effect of Alexander's historical studies. He knew that the growth of an immense privileged class whose corresponding duties had passed into other hands was a link in the chain of causation of the French Revolution. But the plight of the lesser nobility was utterly beyond the scope of measures aimed at restoring their prestige. At the era of

emancipation the majority of this class was already insolvent; and their distress was deepened by the loss of the serfs' labour and money dues. They found it impossible to strike out a new career. The energy, capital, and inherited aptitudes essential to successful farming were wanting; and ingrained thriftlessness led them to realise at a ruinous discount the bonds given in compensation for land transferred to the *mirs*. Many thousands who bore historic titles had sunk to a condition hardly distinguishable from that of the surrounding *mujiks*. Alexander III strove to assist this unhappy class by creating Nobles' Land Banks, which grant loans on mortgage at rates below those extorted by Jewish usurers. Before the close of the century £63,000,000 had been thus advanced. But the condition of the nobility is still deteriorating; and the contrast presented by the growing wealth of the industrial classes is yearly becoming more significant of a social revolution.

All autocratic governments rest on force; and the Tsar of Russia stands in greater need of a loyal and efficient army than any constitutional sovereign. Every male is theoretically bound to serve his country; but many exemptions were conceded to educated youth by the great reform of 1873. Alexander maintained these concessions, but raised the period of service in the case of uninstructed recruits to 23 years, five of which are spent with the colours, thirteen in the Reserve, and five in the Militia. By this change the war strength of the army was increased by 900,000 men. He raised the standard of efficiency of the officers, and laboured to correct the weakness of Miliutin's reforms, which substituted ambition for personal loyalty as a motive for self-improvement. He called out the reserves and militia (*opolchénié*) yearly, and trained them in camps of exercise under conditions closely resembling those of warfare. The forces of European Russia and the Caucasus were organised in 21 Army-corps, and armed with Berdan rifles. Second battalions were added to the 20 regiments of sharpshooters; and this useful branch was augmented by six brigades recruited

in the Caucasus. The regular cavalry was remodelled as dragoons, and each regiment was increased by two squadrons. Field mortars were introduced into the artillery, and that arm was brought up to the high standard maintained in Germany. Russia's western borders are her most vulnerable point. A merely conventional line separates her from Germany and Austria-Hungary, which are armed to the teeth; and the conflict of interests in the near-East, Asia Minor, or the Persian Gulf may at any moment provoke a general war. Alexander III constructed a network of railways connecting the chief strategic points on this line of danger, and made them head-quarters of skeleton cadres, capable of being raised to war-strength in a few days. The Polish frontier is especially weak. It was covered by a vast standing camp at Warsaw, which was linked with Novo Georgiisk by a chain of fortresses. The supervision of these extensive works was the last service rendered to his country by the illustrious Todleben, whose death occurred in July 1884. In strengthening his fleet Alexander encountered serious obstacles. His empire has a comparatively restricted coast-line; its northern ports are choked with ice during a third of the year, and it is debarred from access to the Mediterranean by Turkey's control of the Bosphorus and Dardanelles. Despite these drawbacks, he devoted much time and money to the navy, leaving it armed with 1,400 breech-loading guns and manned by 28,000 sailors. Sebastopol rose from its ruins; and in 1886, Batum, now a terminus of the trans-Caucasus railway, was strongly fortified as a naval basis. This measure was an infringement of the Treaty of Berlin, but England's protest was met by a significant allusion to changes in the Balkan peninsula, and an enquiry whether Russia was the only Power expected to maintain Treaty obligations.

In a population which doubles every sixty years Russia possesses a superabundance of raw material for national defence. It is calculated that, including reserves and militia, she can place 11,000,000 men in the field to meet invasion. The

sinews of war were less abundant. When Alexander III ascended the throne, his exchequer had not recovered from the waste and peculation of the Turkish campaign. The most crying evils arose from an inconvertible paper currency. Its history is curious. At the close of the struggle with Napoleon, assignats were in circulation with a face-value of £88,465,000. It was the settled policy of Alexander I and his successor to lessen this incubus by cancellations; and this process, persisted in during twenty-five years of comparative peace, reduced the amount to £63,000,000. In 1829, Count Kankrin, Minister of Finance, gradually replaced these assignats by credit notes, which were exchanged at the State banks for silver in a ratio of three and a half to one. The new currency underwent many fluctuations during the Crimean and Turkish wars. In 1879, paper-money worth £125,714,000 was in circulation; and the rate of exchange fell to 61 kopeks per gold ruble, which still stood at 350. Cash payments were therefore suspended, and the paper ruble became the monetary unit. Its exchange value rose in the absence of foreign warfare, which enabled the Treasury to cancel £14,200,000 worth of paper-money in five years. As any further reduction in the volume would seriously hamper trade, the Government preferred to introduce a note convertible into gold at a fixed rate. This measure involved a period of preparation which lasted for ten years. In the interval no pains were spared to develop the country's resources and strengthen gold reserves. Alexander II had embarked on a policy of Protection, based on that half-exploded fallacy the Balance of Trade. Finding that, in 1875, the imports of Russia exceeded her exports by £17,000,000, he ordered that, after 1877, all customs duties should be paid in gold. This was tantamount to raising them by fifty per cent., the existing premium on the precious metal. Alexander III was dominated by the same theories. In 1881 he increased all duties except those on salt by 10 per cent.: four years later came another turn of the fiscal screw; and in 1887 the imposts laid on foreign

metals were almost prohibitive. This step menaced Silesian iron works with ruin, and involved Russia in a tariff war with Germany, which raged, with loss to both countries, until it was ended by a treaty in 1894. The stringency defeated its own object, leading to a serious shrinkage in the volume of foreign trade. Its result is shown by the pitiless logic of statistics :—

Years.	Exports.	Imports.	Total.
1881-4,	£59,300,000.	£55,100,000.	£114,400,000.
1885-90,	£64,300,000.	£41,300,000.	£105,600,000.

Domestic industries, which it was sought to protect, suffered as severely by the pressure of taxation. In 1888, that on gold-mining was increased; and additional stamp duties were imposed on bills, land transfers, and registration. But Alexander III is not open to the charge of neglecting the interests of labour. His factory legislation was based on the best English models. Restrictions were placed on the employment of children, and in some trades it was absolutely prohibited. An effort was made to smooth the relations between master and operative, with strict regard for the latter's welfare; and factory inspectors were appointed with extensive powers.

With incalculable latent resources, Russia was still one of the poorest countries in the world; and Slavophil influence rendered her government slow to perceive that the remedy lay in encouraging the ingress of foreign capital. Her international policy inspired distrust abroad, which reacted injuriously on her credit. In 1885 an attempt to launch a public loan was unsuccessful; and when, in the following April, it was at length subscribed, the rate of interest was no less than 6 per cent. In 1888 the budget showed a small surplus; and another effort was made to attract the capitalists of Paris and Berlin. Again it met with no response; but towards the close of the year Government succeeded in placing a loan of £20,000,000 in Paris. This was the first of a long series of borrowings from the immense resources which national thrift

places at the disposal of the French people. In ten years nearly £280,000,000 were extracted from their strong boxes. The proceeds enabled Government to convert the National Debt to a uniform standard of 4 per cent. A large portion was devoted to armaments; but in October 1891 a new departure was made in a loan of £20,000,000 to be devoted to railway extension. In the meantime Russia's credit was raised by the palpable development of her resources. In 1890 the ordinary revenue was £101,500,000, the surplus £3,381,000. A deficit of £4,000,000 was shown by the budget of the succeeding years owing to the calls of famine expenditure. In 1892, however, equilibrium returned, and thenceforward the surpluses have been very considerable.

A new era dawned for Russia in January 1891, when Alexander III selected S. J. Witte for the Ministry of Finance and Commerce. In the latter's view countries depending on agriculture must always be tributary to others possessing a large industrial population. A peasant-proprietary lacks capital, enterprise, education, manual skill—in short every factor making for material progress. But Russia possesses enormous stores of mineral wealth which have not yet been drawn upon. The Ural Mountains, Caucasus, and Mid-Siberia are rich in every species of metal. Coal is yielded by the Donetz Valley, and iron by the Krivoi-Rog fields in juxtaposition. The petroleum deposits of the Caspian shores cast those of America into the shade. Nor is labour wanting, for Russian peasants are deft-fingered, imitative, and suited to the factory system. In M. Witte's opinion a measure of protection must be extended to nascent industries in order to give free play to raw material, and draw the surplus population from an overtaxed soil. But this device must needs be temporary in its action and cease as soon as its object is attained—the liberation of Russia from dependence on foreign markets for her supplies of manufactured goods. In other words, Protection must be educative, and the loss to the consumer entailed by the enhanced price demanded for

native wares must be curtailed. In the advent of foreign capital M. Witte seeks a remedy for the gravest evil of Protection—its suppression of healthy competition among producers. Russia is a world in herself, with 135,000,000 inhabitants and all varieties of soil, climate, raw products, and race. Her extent gives ample scope for practising Free Trade doctrines.

Next to capital, Russia's greatest want is railway communications. Her vast distances paralyse industry and render good government impossible. Alexander III appears to have grasped this fact towards the close of his reign. In May 1891 a Rescript appeared directing the construction of a line which was to link the European system with the Pacific Coast. The present Tsar, then heir-apparent, was appointed the president of a commission for carrying this stupendous design into effect, and he has attended every meeting. During a tour throughout the far-East undertaken in 1891, which is a landmark in Russia's development, he inaugurated the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway at Vladivostok, on the Pacific coast.

We have observed Alexander III employing reaction in a mitigated form in his battle with Nihilism at home. The guiding principle in his dealings with the fringe of provinces brought within Russia's orbit by conquest was the empire's unity. Poland saw the last embers of her national spirit stifled by edicts imposing the Russian language on primary schools and candidates for public employ. In 1885 a conspiracy was unearthed at Warsaw. Its suppression furnished an excuse for measures directed against the wealth and influence of the nobility. Poles were forbidden by ukase to acquire land in Volhynia and Lithuania; and another ordinance extended this disability to non-Russians in regard to property within the limits of Poland proper. Two years later it was ordained that, on a foreign landowner's death, his estates must be sold, unless his heirs had been established in Poland before the date of the ukase. These laws were levelled against German immigration.

Not only did they reduce the value of landed property, but they goaded Prince Bismarck to inhuman reprisals. During the winter of 1885-6 many thousands of Russian Poles who had settled in the Prussian provinces of the ancient kingdom were sent across the frontier. The Baltic, incorrectly styled "German," provinces of Russia afforded the next subject for unification. Esthonia, Livonia, and Kurland were originally peopled by Letts and Finns, and conquered by German Knights of the Sword in the 13th century. The Teutonic element is numerically insignificant, including merely the nobility, Lutheran pastors, and urban commercial classes. At the accession of Alexander II this section enjoyed a monopoly of influence. In 1819 the peasants had secured personal freedom; but as the gift was unaccompanied by land, their dependence on the nobility was even closer than in the days of serfdom. Education was entirely controlled by the clergy; and the corporations were virtually independent. German influences prevailed in society and were reflected in language and culture. Alexander's passion for symmetry was offended by the existence of alien forces on his north-western frontier. Moreover, a real political danger lurked in the cry for reunion with the "lost provinces" set up by the exaggerated national spirit of United Germany. In 1882 a countermine was opened by Slavophil agents, who travelled through the Baltic territory urging the peasantry to strike a blow for land and liberty. A servile war broke out; castles and country-seats were pillaged; and a plan of campaign was organised on the Irish model. The complaints of ruined landlords were echoed in the German press, but they excited small sympathy in Russian officials. The unrest, however, gave Alexander a pretext for bringing Livonia, Esthonia, and Kurland within the Empire's fold. He made the consent of the Holy Synod a preliminary to the erection of churches; the management of schools was transferred from Lutheran consistories to the Minister of Public Instruction. A little later, schoolmasters supported by local states-general and municipalities were ordered



to teach Russian or close their doors. The University of Dorpat, hitherto a strictly German centre, was compelled to conduct its courses of lectures in Russian. The very names of the Baltic towns were changed; and Teutonic influences, attacked in religion, language, and culture, succumbed in the unequal struggle.

Finland was slower to feel the application of doctrines summed up in the maxim, "One Russia, one Creed, one Tsar." Alexander III appreciated its simple but cultivated people. In earlier life he loved to cruise on the island-dotted coast and mix freely with all classes. On acceding to the crown he gladly signed the usual Act of Assurance securing the Grand Duchy the exercise of its religion and fundamental laws; and his proclamation convoking the Estates for the following January referred to the pleasant memories attaching to this land of granite, lake, and pine forest. The earlier Diets, which met triennially after 1882, were occupied chiefly in framing a Penal Code. In 1888 the Bill prepared by the four Estates received Alexander's sanction, but by this time the trend of Russian feeling towards unification had grown more marked. The Code was relegated to a commission sitting at the Ministry of Justice, St Petersburg, and did not pass the Diet till 1894. The same influences were shown by the appointment in 1890 of three commissions, with a preponderating Russian element, with orders to prepare plans for assimilating the Finnish postal, monetary, and fiscal systems with those of the Empire. This new departure, as well as the fate of the original Penal Code, was regarded in Finland as wholly unconstitutional. Protests were tendered by the Marshal of Nobility and the Speakers of the other Estates. Alexander's reply was conciliatory, but the Russifying process continued with increasing vigour. It was provoked by the growth of national sentiment in Finland, which took its birth in the concessions of the preceding reign, and was fomented by party politics. The latter grouped themselves into factions

which made language a battle-cry. "Swecomans" urged the superior claims of Swedish, the tongue spoken by the race which gave Finland its laws and civilisation. "Fennomans" were even more eager to promote the study of Finnish, a language akin to Magyar and offering immense difficulty to the foreigner. Russian jealousy was excited by the rather aggressive spirit evolved by the dispute. In 1891 the Finnish Committee sitting at St Petersburg was dissolved, and the Secretary of State for the Grand Duchy resigned his office. During the same year Finnish newspapers were placed under a rigid censorship. The national impulse was thwarted by a series of ordinances which made Russian obligatory in the case of public servants. Finlanders were convinced that their independence was threatened, and their resentment was shown by the cold reception given to Alexander III when he visited the coast and lake region in July 1891.

We have seen Alexander surrounded at his accession by grave domestic perils. He could not have derived much satisfaction from a survey of the political horizon abroad. The international rivalries engendered by the Turkish War destroyed the old Triple Alliance. Prince Bismarck manipulated them with his usual perspicuity and want of scruple. In October 1879 he had entered into a secret treaty with Austria-Hungary which secured common action against Russia. At the same time he had succeeded in binding Germany with Russia by a convention in which Austria-Hungary was no partner. Relations with England were strained almost to breaking-point by the Afghan War, the origin and course of which have been sketched above (p. 238). Alexander III's instincts were averse to the republican government set up in France; and the sympathy was as yet unborn which united Powers representing the opposite poles of political thought. Russia's influence in Turkey was annihilated by the Berlin Treaty. The Sultan, relying on Austrian and German protection, refused compliance with every demand and evaded payment of the war indemnity.

promised at San Stefano. Russia stood alone in the face of a suspicious and hostile Europe.

The news of the odious crime which destroyed Alexander II caused stupefaction in every Court and capital. Prejudices were laid aside while the Powers hastened to render homage to his memory. But these feelings were transient. It was believed on all sides that the young Tsar would divert public attention from Nihilistic manœuvres by launching the immense forces at his command on a career of conquest. These forebodings were, however, dispelled by a circular issued to foreign Courts in March 1881. Russia, it declared, would uphold her position as a great Power, and act in concert with the others to maintain the world's peace as ensured by existing treaties. But "the chief concern of Russia was concern for herself." These principles revealed a new departure in foreign policy. During previous reigns the Empire had been plunged into sanguinary wars; resources of vital moment to its progress had been squandered in the pursuit of ideas which had no bearing whatever on its welfare. In future the sword would be drawn only to maintain Russia's honour and safety; never for such abstractions as legitimism or the freedom of peoples allied by race and religion. Although Alexander III unswervingly pursued these conceptions of state-craft, he did not relinquish the friendly intercourse maintained by his father with relatives on foreign thrones. In September 1881 he met the German Emperor at Danzig. This interview was followed by visits rendered by the Foreign Minister, M. de Giers, to Berlin and Varzin, Prince Bismarck's country residence. In 1884 glorious associations were evoked by the seventieth anniversary of the War of Liberation, in which William I had fought as a stripling under the Russian flag. The old hero was presented with a Field-Marshal's bâton; and his Chancellor took advantage of the general enthusiasm to propose a renewal of the Triple Alliance. During the conferences which followed, Prince Bismarck persuaded M. de Giers to accept an important

modification of its terms. If two of the allied Powers were at war with a fourth, the third stood pledged to benevolent neutrality. Alexander III was aware of the secret treaty entered into by Austria-Hungary and Germany in 1879; he also knew that the new provision was aimed at France. He therefore rejected it; but the secret treaty with Germany was renewed, each Power promising a benevolent neutrality in the case of an attack upon the other (October 1884). The existence of this treaty was unknown till 1896.

A change was produced in Russia's relations with her neighbours by the course of events in the Balkan peninsula, which became the pivot of continental politics. The states of which it was made up owed to Russia their liberation from Turkish rule, but with one exception they did not appreciate the boon. Montenegro stood firm in its devotion to the great Slav empire. Its patriarch-prince, Nicholas Petrovich, maintained unbroken touch with St Petersburg, and was drawn closer to his protector by family ties. This mountain citadel, the home of a race which has never been crushed by Ottoman power, was an outwork of Russia, an instrument ever ready to further her designs. The other autonomous States were endowed with popular assemblies and became the prey of every passion let loose by party government. Rumania had a Senate, a Chamber of Deputies—all the paraphernalia of a constitutional kingdom. Serbia was ruled by its Skupchina; Bulgaria by a Sobranié. Each looked fondly back to a mythical past and was stirred to aggression by legends of former greatness. The Balkans, in fact, were a Europe in miniature; with the frontier disputes, the commercial rivalries, the greed and selfishness which render the Continent one vast armed camp.

Rumania, governed by Charles I, a prince who has all the best qualities of the Hohenzollerns, was antagonistic to Russia by reason of race antipathy and a rankling sense of injustice. When in May 1881 he assumed the royal title, his accession

to the brotherhood of kings was accepted by Alexander III in recognition of the generalship he had displayed in the recent struggle. In March 1882 his example was followed by Prince Milan Obrenovich of Serbia, who dubbed himself king of a territory scarcely a third as large, with a population of 2,000,000. Though Serbia was a focus of Austrian influence, the Tsar recognised the change without demur. Bulgaria, restricted by the Berlin Treaty to territory north of the Balkans, was ruled by Prince Alexander of Battenberg, who was allied by blood with Alexander III, and his comrade in arms during the Turkish War. He was inclined to resent the rigorous tutelage imposed by his Russian protectors, and strove with success to awake his subjects' national instincts. The Russian ministers found their position untenable and resigned office, a step which was followed by the dismissal of all their fellow-countrymen who held commissions in the Bulgarian army. This imprudent move gave mortal offence to Alexander III. An ostensible reconciliation took place, and the Prince of Bulgaria accepted a Russian war minister. But it did not long endure. On the south of the Balkan range lay Eastern Rumelia, an autonomous Turkish province created by the Berlin Treaty. Its inhabitants were identical in race and language with the subjects of Prince Alexander, and a vehement longing for union was felt on both sides of the Balkans. In September 1885 a bloodless revolution broke out at the Rumelian town of Sofia. The Turkish Governor-General was sent across the frontier, and by a unanimous vote of the Sobranié the government of Rumelia was offered to Prince Alexander. After some hesitation he accepted the gift, and telegraphed the fact to the Tsar, who recalled his subjects serving under the Bulgarian flag and vouchsafed no answer to the Prince's despairing offer to abdicate.

Both the Sobraniés now despatched a deputation to St Petersburg in the hope of mollifying the Tsar's indignation. In receiving them he guardedly said that he would endeavour

to find a solution of the Bulgarian question in concert with the other Powers. At the same time he showed the abhorrence which the venture evoked by striking Prince Alexander's name from the Russian army-list. The jealousy of Servia was excited by her neighbour's aggrandisement; and King Milan, after launching a declaration of war, invaded Bulgaria at the head of a large army. Numerical superiority enabled the Servians to score a few initial successes, but the superior discipline and leading of the Bulgarians soon turned the scale. Prince Alexander inflicted a series of defeats on the invaders and drove them across the frontier. Pursuing their advantage the Bulgarians entered Servia, and but for Austrian intervention they would have captured Belgrad. The conqueror made a second effort to disarm the Tsar's persistent hostility, but he proved implacable. His reply gave a meed of praise to the bravery of the Bulgarian troops, but made no mention of their leader. Prince Alexander in his despair turned to the Sultan. A treaty was executed which made him Governor-General of Eastern Rumelia for five years; and a convention united the forces of Turkey and Bulgaria in the event of attacks on either. The Tsar protested vigorously against this arrangement, and on his initiative a conference of the Powers assembled at Constantinople. It decided on April 5, 1886, that the Governor-Generalship of Eastern Rumelia was inherent in the office of Prince of Bulgaria, but abrogated the military convention.

Prince Alexander was now to all appearance in a strong position. A successful war made him respected throughout Europe, and his popularity at home was boundless. But the intrigues of the pro-Russian party in Bulgaria continued without intermission. On August 21, 1886, the Prince was kidnapped in his palace, forced to sign an abdication, and spirited across the Danube. Thence, under instructions from St Petersburg, he was conveyed to Lemberg in Austrian territory, and set at liberty. This amazing *coup d'état* was not to the taste of his

subjects. A counter-revolution was planned by Stefan Stambulov, a lawyer who had won distinction by eloquence and patriotism, and risen to the chairmanship of the Sobranié. At its outbreak the pro-Russians fled. Stambulov organised a nationalist Regency, which invited the banished prince to return. On September 3 he entered Sofia in triumph, and was greeted with heartfelt joy by the people. But it was in vain that he sent a telegram to the Tsar, couched in terms of humble submission. The reply convinced him that his all-powerful relative was a deadly and persistent foe. Finding his position untenable he abdicated by a manifesto, adding that Russia had guaranteed the independence of the United Bulgarias. On September 8, 1886, he quitted Sofia for ever, followed by the regrets of the Bulgarian people. A Regency, again headed by Stambulov, assumed the temporary direction of affairs.

The Tsar's policy in the Balkans indicated a resolve to act, if need be, without regard for the European concert which, indeed, was rapidly becoming obsolete. He was deeply irritated by the encouragement given by Austria-Hungary to Bulgarian recalcitrance, and he knew that the Dual Monarchy would not have dared to thwart his designs had she not arrived at a secret understanding with Germany. As years went by, his relations with the neighbouring empires grew colder. Katkov, the fearless editor of the *Moscow Gazette*, was permitted to draw a parallel between de Giers' visits to Bismarck and the pilgrimages undertaken by Russian princes to the camp of the Golden Horde in days of Tatar domination. His exhortation fell on willing ears. France was the only great Power whose political aspirations did not clash with those of Russia. Common jealousies drew them nearer together. Alexander III was inclined to resent the growth of British influence in Afghanistan. France was humiliated by England's intervention in the affairs of Egypt. She had always regarded that country as a dependency, and could not forget that the Suez Canal had

been constructed with French capital in the teeth of English opposition. An attempt at dual control was destroyed by the bombardment of Alexandria and the suppression of Arabi Pasha's rebellion (1882). Thenceforward England ruled supreme in Egypt; and her rival smarted under a check which her own want of resolution had produced.

But the death-knell of the German Alliance was struck by a revolution which broke out in Bulgaria after Prince Alexander's abdication. The general elections resulted in the total discomfiture of the Russian party, and the triumphant Nationalists offered the vacant throne to Prince Waldemar of Denmark. Under pressure from Alexander III his father refused the perilous gift on his behalf. Thereupon a delegation of Bulgarians travelled through Europe in search of a ruler. Their choice fell on Ferdinand of Saxe-Coburg, whose mother, Princess Clementine, was a daughter of the House of Orleans, and wielded great influence in the European Courts. She secured the active support of Germany for her son's candidature. In August 1887 he made a state entry into Tirnova. His proclamation alluded to the ancient independence and unity of his country "under the glorious sway of the Bulgarian Tsars," but he made warm protestations of loyalty to Turkey. Alexander III protested with vigour in a Note addressed to the great Powers. He even urged the Sultan to occupy Bulgaria and expel the intruder. Abdul Hamid received these overtures with coldness. He preferred an independent State in the Balkans to a Bulgaria which would nominally be his vassal, but in reality would serve as a focus of Russian intrigues. Great Britain stood aloof for similar reasons. The Tsar's patience was exhausted by the opposition encountered on all sides. He summoned the Sultan to pay the war indemnity secured by the Treaty of San Stefano, with a threatened occupation of certain districts in Turkish Armenia. This demand was evaded by the Porte with the procrastination which has always been its most effectual weapon. The Bulgarian



premier Stambulov maintained his position by appeals to the national spirit and the ruthlessness with which he crushed plots fomented against his authority. Prince Ferdinand's hold became less precarious. A Bulgarian loan was successfully launched in the European markets; and, though no great Power ventured to recognise the new régime, the Prince was able to baffle his mighty neighbour. It must be admitted that Russia's policy in the Balkans was governed neither by tact nor wisdom. So overbearing was the tutelage exercised after the pacification that Bulgarians soon forgot that their independence had been bought with Russian blood. The estrangement of a people which might have served as a bulwark in the Balkan peninsula was completed by the indignities inflicted on the unhappy Alexander of Battenberg, who was revered by Bulgarians as a national hero.

The German Powers had anticipated the break-up of the league of the three Emperors by coming to terms with Italy, alienated from France by the French occupation of Tunis (1880). The beginnings of the new combination date back to 1881; and a defensive Treaty of Alliance between Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy was signed in 1883. The union between the three Powers was renewed when Ferdinand Crispi succeeded to the premiership in August 1887. Under his lead Italy embarked on a policy of bloated armaments and colonial enterprise, which sorely taxed her strength and threw her into the arms of the military monarchies.

The new Triple Alliance received moral support from England, owing to her rivalry with Russia and France in the East; and the two Powers whom it appeared to menace instinctively drew closer together. Their union was cemented by financial considerations, which weigh as heavily with states as with individuals. Some excitement was caused in Northern Germany by the Russification of the Baltic Provinces, which formed part of Alexander's domestic policy. Pan-Germanism was ruffled; and in November 1886 the Imperial Bank at

Berlin announced that Russian securities would not in future be received in liquidation of loans. The flames were fanned by a tariff war, provoked by the Tsar's protective policy; and a loan invited at Berlin in January 1888 met with no response. Then Russia turned to the Western Republic for help, and the appeal was not preferred in vain. Amazing, indeed, was the success attending a series of Franco-Russian loans, launched between 1889 and 1891. One for £14,400,000 was subscribed for seven times over in Paris alone. The steady stream of French gold enabled Russia to convert her public securities to a uniform rate of 4 per cent., to extend her railways, and develop her armaments. The death of the first German Emperor in March 1888 removed a personality which was venerated in Russia, and bound to the dynasty by close ties of kindred. During his son's short reign an incident occurred which brought the two Empires to the verge of war. Prince Alexander of Battenberg was accepted by the Empress Victoria as a suitor for her daughter's hand. Russo-German relations were already strained, and the news increased the exasperation of Alexander III. Reinforcements were hurried into Poland from the Caucasus, and the western frontier bristled with troops. Bismarck's influence availed to break off the obnoxious match, and on the accession of William II an attempt was made to renew the old intimacy by an exchange of imperial visits. But the past was beyond recall, nor did the dismissal of Prince Bismarck in March 1890 repair the breach for which his policy was in the main responsible. Thus was completed the revolution which detached Russia from her alliance with the Central European Powers. In 1886 the Tsar showed by his action in the Balkans that he admitted no interference there; in 1887 he resigned himself to complete isolation.

In 1891, a state of things which augured ill for the world's peace gave place to an understanding with the French Republic. The manner in which Europe learnt the new departure was dramatic. In July a French squadron under

Admiral Gervais cast anchor at Cronstadt on the "name-day" of the Empress. It received an enthusiastic reception. Alexander III dined on board the French flagship, and stood while the Marseillaise was played. Admiral Gervais and his officers were sumptuously entertained on a Russian war-vessel, and their visit to Moscow was a prolonged ovation. Public feeling in France was excited almost to delirium by the prospect of a Russian alliance, for it seemed to guarantee the Republic against German aggression. Nor were more material ties wanting. In June 1893 the two countries entered into a Commercial Treaty, which favoured the introduction into Russia of French wines and the thousand-and-one pretty trifles of which Paris holds the monopoly. The enthusiasm was sustained by a return visit paid in October by the Russian Mediterranean squadron, commanded by Admiral Avelane. The superior officers met with a royal reception at Paris and Toulon; and the President himself reviewed the vessels on the eve of their departure. During Alexander's reign Russo-French relations did not assume a more definite shape than a mutual understanding. It was left to his successor to build a treaty of alliance thereon which may profoundly modify the course of twentieth century history.

Among the causes which led to the fall of the old Triple Alliance was a remark attributed to Bismarck. Russia, he said, had no concern in the West, where she could acquire nothing but Nihilism and other social maladies. Her mission was in Asia. There she represented civilisation. There was a grain of truth in the apophthegm which added to its sting. Alexander III did not add an inch to his European territories, but his acquisitions in Central Asia were on an enormous scale. The annexation of Western Turkomania, following on the victory of Geok Tepe, delivered Northern Persia from bloodshed and rapine. The Shah rejoiced at the extirpation of a nest of brigands, and welcomed a suggestion that the Kopet Dagh range and the river Atrek, south-east of the Caspian Sea,

should form the southern boundaries of Asiatic Russia. A treaty ceding to Russia all territory north of this line was concluded with Persia on December 22, 1881. Nasr ed Din thus abandoned his shadowy claim to suzerainty over the Turkoman tribes. The Akkal oasis was already within the Russian grasp. There remained but the great oasis of Merv, which had once been the seat of a flourishing empire. It stretched wedge-wise far into the dominions of Persia and Afghanistan; and its southern limits were within sixty miles of the Afghan citadel Herat, a range of undulating hills, known in ancient days as the Paropamisus, intervening. Now Herat was generally regarded in England as a key to India, and the approaching conquest of Turkomania excited lively apprehension there. It was allayed for a time by assurances given to Lord Dufferin, ambassador at Constantinople, that the Russian Government had no intention of annexing Merv. Once more Russian promises were falsified by events in Central Asia.

Among Russia's astutest agents in that troubled region was Colonel Alikhanov, a Mohammadan from Daghestan. His intrigues among the Tekke chieftains of Merv paved the way for their acceptance of Russian authority; and diplomacy was aided by a military demonstration towards Merv in the winter of 1883. In the following February the chiefs of the four Tekke tribes, with 124 delegates from outlying colonies, met at Askabad, which had become the centre of the Transcaspian government. After some discussion they tendered unqualified obedience; and their example was imitated by the Sarik tribes settled between Merv and the Afghan frontier. The tract which thus came under Russian influence was an irregular parallelogram between the Amu Darya and the Tejend, a local name for the Hari Rud, which washes the walls of Herat. The north-eastern boundary of Persia was placed at Sarrakhs by a convention with the Shah, made in March 1884; but the southern limits were still undefined. Geographically they were marked by the Paropamisus, a spur of the Kuh-i-Baba range,

which declines into a plateau termed Badghis, or "Wind-swept." Here the Murghab, which fertilises Merv, and its confluent the Kushk, take their rise. An Afghan fortress, named Bala Murghab, commands the middle reaches of the Murghab; and forty miles to the north-west lie the village and oasis of Penjdeh, claimed by Afghanistan by virtue of a decision of the Indian Government in 1840, and by Russia as a result of the Sarik Turkomans' submission. Thus the undefined area which Russia sought to grasp was within easy reach of the richest provinces belonging to Persia and Afghanistan. All its ancient glories would revive with settled government. The news that it was about to be appropriated excited alarm in London; and the Amir Abdur-Rahman was induced by England to adopt a proposal made two years earlier that the northern boundary of Afghanistan should be settled by a mixed commission. On receiving the assent of Russia, the British representative, Sir Peter Lumsden, traversed Afghanistan in November, 1884, with an escort five hundred strong. On reaching the debateable land he discussed the boundary question with his Russian colleague, General Zelenoi, but was utterly unable to arrive at a basis of action. The Russians insisted on securing an ethnological frontier, which should include Penjdeh; the English preferred a geographical boundary formed by a conventional line drawn from Old Sarrakhs to Khwaja Salah on the Amu Darya.

Encouraged by the presence of Sir Peter Lumsden at their head-quarters, the Afghans cut the Gordian knot by advancing northwards from Bala Murghab and seizing Penjdeh. General Komarov, who commanded the Russian forces, promptly occupied the Zulfikar Pass on the Hari Rud, and pushed onwards to Pul-i-kishti, at the edge of the oasis. On March 30, 1885, he summoned the Afghans to evacuate Penjdeh, and, meeting with a refusal, he led a force of twelve hundred men against their rabble of 40,000, putting it to head-long flight with a loss of six cannon. A profound sensation

was created in England by the news of Tash Kupri, the name given by Russians to the victory. The reserves were called out, and Parliament voted £11,000,000 for war preparations. In India the prospect of a collision with Russia raised excitement to fever-pitch. Many of the great feudatories tendered an assurance of loyalty to the Crown. English engineers were despatched to fortify Herat, and troops were massed under the Commander-in-Chief, Sir Frederick Roberts, at all strategic points on the north-western frontier. On April 8th, 1885, the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, met Abdur-Rahman at Rawal Pindi, and assured him that England and Afghanistan should stand side by side. The Amir was astute enough to India, he would be placed between the upper and lower stones of the event of a conflict between the neighbouring empires. His aversion to war was strengthened by Dufferin's counsel, but the two countries owed a peaceful solution of the matter in issue to the tact and geographical knowledge of that eminent Russian explorer, M. Paul Lessar. Diplomacy thus scored a triumph. In July, 1885, an Anglo-Russian Boundary Commission was appointed, which, working in perfect harmony, laid down a boundary line satisfactory to both parties, if not to Afghanistan. Russia obtained the right bank of the Hari Rud and the whole of the Badghis, including Penjdeh. Her southern boundary was advanced to a point 73 miles from Herat.

It remained to consolidate these vast acquisitions by a railway. In April 1885 a ukase ordered the construction of a line connecting Usan Ada on the Caspian with Merv, and placed General Annenkov in charge of the enterprise. A happier choice could not have been made. Annenkov began by recruiting two battalions of railway operatives in Russia and the Caucasus on a strictly military basis. Want of water was the chief engineering difficulty. He overcame it by organizing a camp on wheels, supplied from a distillery at the Caspian base, which moved eastwards, laying the permanent way as it

advanced. Unskilled labour was furnished by the Turkomans, whose lawless means of existence had been suppressed by armed force. Merv was reached in 14 months, and the arrival of the first locomotive at that ancient robbers' lair was the occasion of a public festival. It was now resolved to continue the railway to Samarkand. The section between Merv and Charjui on the Amu Darya presented enormous difficulties. It traverses a desert of sand which is constantly encroaching on the oases in Central Asia, and was blown in dense masses into the railway cuttings. Annenkov mastered this obstacle by planting *saxaul*, a shrub with spreading roots which thrives without rain-water. In four months the Amu Darya was reached, and in six more that river was spanned by a timber viaduct with a waterway of 2,270 yards. In September 1887 Annenkov entered on the final stage of his task, with the aid of a third railway battalion posted at Charjui. The country east of the Amu Darya is comparatively fertile and well-peopled. Work was carried on with great speed; and in May 1888 Samarkand, the ancient capital of Tamerlane, was linked with the Caspian. Within a few weeks a regular train service was established throughout the length of 879 miles. The Trans-Caspian railway was intended to serve strategic purposes, but its value was soon discovered by the civil population. Ere the close of Alexander's reign the traffic in raw cotton had assumed huge proportions, and the Moscow mills were no longer dependent on America.

The administration established in Central Asia owes its present form mainly to General Alexis Kurapatkin, the first governor of Transcaspia, who is equally distinguished as soldier and statesman. It is the outcome of an attempt to graft Russian institutions on an indigenous trunk. The unit is the district, administered by a military officer, and mapped out into subdivisions, which are in their turn divided into groups of twenty-five villages. It has been an axiom of Russian policy to break the power of the tribal chief, whose authority passed into the

hands of mayors elected by the inhabitants of each village. Justice is controlled by a Judicial Commission; and the subordinate mechanism strongly resembles that which Russia owes to Alexander II. Russian law is administered by District Courts and Judges of the Peace, but it is tempered by the opinion of Mohammedan law-officers. Irrigation, of vital importance in that thirsty land, was too complicated a matter for Russian interference, and was therefore left in the hands of villagers assisted by trained engineers. The same principle of *laissez-faire* was applied to education. It is conducted by the Mohammedan priesthood, whose dream is the restoration of a theocracy by the light shed by the Kuran. Such men are, and must always be, the mortal foes of European rule; and in the revival of Islam which will shake the Eastern world the influence of these fanatics' teaching will assuredly be felt in Central Asia. But, for the present, Russia rests secure in her overwhelming military strength and her ruthless suppression of revolts. The Tatar strain in her national character promotes a sympathy between conquerors and subject-races which can never exist in British India. Nor can it be denied that the Russians are sincerely desirous of furthering the happiness of their subjects in the East, and that Central Asia enjoys a degree of material well-being unknown in its troublous history.

In September 1894 news was flashed through Europe that the master of this new Empire in the East lay stricken with mortal disease. It came as a shock to all who were not conversant with the inner life at Gatshina, a palace which stands, secluded in magnificent gardens, 25 miles south of St Petersburg. Alexander's strength seemed equal to any burden; and loyal Russians hoped that the destinies of their country would long remain in his vigorous hands. Those who appreciated his simple, kindly nature were not deceived by outward appearances, for they knew too well that his splendid constitution had been sapped by toil and a constant sense of danger. The battle with anarchy had been well-nigh



won. As years passed by, the new forces brought into play against it told with increasing weight. But its death-struggles were prolonged, and its efforts were concentrated against the man whose existence rendered the accomplishment of Nihilism impossible. In May 1888 an army officer named Timofief attempted the Tsar's life. On October 29 a catastrophe befell the imperial train at Borki in Southern Russia, in which twenty-one lives were lost and many more passengers were injured. Among the latter was Alexander III, and he never recovered from the terrible shock. Though there is reason to believe that the Borki accident was due to defects in the permanent way, it was universally attributed to the Nihilists. In March 1890 one of the confraternity, who had been selected by lot to slay the Tsar, committed suicide, leaving a written confession which led to many arrests. A conspiracy was detected at Moscow in November of the following year, and another at St Petersburg in April 1894. The strain was too great for human strength, and the efforts made to lessen it served only to accentuate Alexander's nervous prostration. He lived virtually a prisoner at Gatshina or the Winter Palace, surrounded by a cordon of soldiers and police-agents. On his brief absences from home the Empress never bade her husband farewell without a dismal foreboding that he would not return to her alive. Despite the constant tension, Alexander's sense of duty led him to undertake responsibilities such as no predecessor had attempted. One of his last rescripts created an Imperial Committee of Control, which brought every action of his ministers under their master's personal supervision. Alexander's untimely fate offers one proof the more that a tendency to centralise may be carried to extreme limits.

While his vital powers were visibly decreasing he was attacked by influenza. Inflammation of the kidneys supervened and brought him to the doors of death. On Sept. 30 the Empress accompanied him by slow stages to Livadia, a palace which nestles among semi-tropical foliage on the

southern shore of the Crimea. The disease continued unabated, and preparations were made for conveying the patient, as a last resource, to Corfu. But the heartbroken Empress saw that all effort was unavailing. On Nov. 1, 1894, the Tsar passed away without a struggle, in his fiftieth year.

The reign of Alexander III marks a new epoch in Russian history. In many phases it resembled that of his grandfather, Nicholas I. Both rulers sought the happiness of their people in securing a continuity of national life, and upholding the institutions which had enabled Russia to weather many a political storm. Both were men of deep religious instincts, while their attachment to orthodoxy was rooted in a knowledge that the Church was the source of autocratic power, that its adherents are united in devotion to its visible head. There, however, the parallel ends. Nicholas I brought Russia to the verge of ruin because his mind, cast in a mediæval mould, was impervious to the influences which stir the modern world. Alexander III recognised the fact that autocracy must follow the workings of that natural law which prescribes progress as the sole alternative of decay. By timely concessions he stifled the incubus of anarchy, and placed the fabric of his Empire on renewed and securer foundations. Unlike all his ancestors on the throne, he never squandered the resources of Russia in war undertaken for objects which were foreign to her real interests. The intense strength of his character and prepossessions betrayed him into errors of policy in the Balkan peninsula, but it never tempted him to draw the sword. His reign was one of unbroken peace, of sedulous care for his people's welfare; and not the least among his titles to glory is that he was justly styled the Peasants' Tsar. Russians of all degrees followed Alexander III to his tomb with tears of gratitude and love. Nor will history, for whose teachings he had so deep a respect, deny him a place in the foremost rank of the benefactors of mankind.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### A PEACEFUL REVOLUTION.

NICHOLAS II. 1894-1900.

EVENTS of very recent date belong to the indefinable, ever-advancing present, and have as yet no clear relation with history, which rules over the past. And there are other circumstances that render a connected narrative of events during the last decade of the century impossible of attainment. Most of the documents involved are still in the confidential stage. The motives underlying any given line of policy can be defined only when its results have unfolded themselves. Good taste enjoins circumspection in criticising actors in the great drama of an empire's progress who are still in our midst; nor can any statesman's life-work be judged as a whole until the grave has closed over his achievements and shortcomings. The concluding chapter of this sketch of Russia's development is but a collection of materials which may possibly serve the annalist of the future.

Nicholas II was born on May 18, 1868, and was still in early manhood when he ascended the throne of All the Russias. He had acquired more experience in administration and a fuller knowledge of the Empire's needs than any of his predecessors. The programme of his education was traced by Alexander III, whose injunction was, "Neglect nothing that can make my son

truly a man." The Empress-mother, too, bore her part in moulding his character. She dreaded the influence of a single mind, and laid stress on the employment of many tutors. The best remembered of them all was an Englishman named Heath, who, in his pupil's own words, taught him that "a man's happiness may be measured by the amount of happiness which he confers on others." The course of study embraced no dead languages ; but the Tsarevich learned to speak English, French, and German with equal facility. He received a thorough grounding in mathematics, physical science, and political economy ; nor was history, his father's favourite study, neglected. The ideal in ancient Greece was a parallel training of the brain and muscles. This was, perhaps unconsciously, adopted by Alexander III, for the Tsarevich was permitted to indulge his love of athletic exercises and open-air sports. As was fitting in the case of the heir of a military monarchy, his apprenticeship to the army commenced in childhood. At 13 he was appointed Ataman of the Cossacks, and passed through all the grades in succession. At 23 he became President of a Commission appointed to prepare designs for the Trans-Siberian Railway. But his chief lesson in the art of governing was afforded by a nine months' tour undertaken in November, 1890. He traversed British India, mixing freely with men of all degrees, and travelled in China and Japan, where he narrowly escaped assassination at the hands of a fanatical officer. Landing at Vladivostok, he inaugurated the construction of the Trans-Siberian Railway. He returned to Moscow by way of Siberia in the following August, with a thorough grasp of the problems presented by contact with oriental races, and a conviction that Russia's mission lay in the Asiatic continent.

The manifesto which a Tsar is wont to issue on his accession reflects the principles which are uppermost in his mind, and affords a clue to his foreign policy. Nicholas II affirmed his intention to "promote the progress and peaceful glory of our beloved Russia, and the happiness of all our faithful subjects."

A circular addressed to the great Powers in November, 1894, struck the selfsame note. Europe learnt that the late Tsar's views of international ethics were shared by his son, and that the new reign would be consecrated to the arts of peace. On November 26, 1894, Nicholas II married the Princess Alice of Hesse-Darmstadt, who assumed the name of Alexandra Feodorovna on entering the national Church. Like her mother, who was the sweetest and most beloved of Queen Victoria's daughters, the Empress finds her chief pleasures in the family circle, and devotes her time and accomplishments to promoting the happiness of those with whom she is brought into contact. The Tsar made no changes of moment in the knot of councillors who surrounded his father. M. S. J. Witte was confirmed in the functions of Minister of Finance and Commerce. The portfolio of Public Works was confided to Prince Khilkov, a man of equal energy, with a predilection for American methods. In January, 1895, M. de Giers closed a life devoted to the interests of peace, and was succeeded by Prince Lobanov-Rostovski, who had shown rare diplomatic ability at Vienna. At his death, while accompanying his master on a railway journey (August 30, 1896), the Ministry of Foreign Affairs devolved on Count Muraviev, whose experience and moderation fitted him for that arduous post. M. Pobiedonostsev continued to rule the Holy Synod with an iron hand.

No human being can escape the influences of his environment. A Russian Tsar is in theory an absolute monarch; but he must conform to the unwritten laws which govern the development of his Empire. The party which has adopted Western ideals of progress hoped to find an ally in the new ruler; and a deputation of all classes of his subjects which rendered homage to him in January, 1895, hinted that the zemstvos might become the germ of representative institutions. They were told that the Tsar intended to maintain the principle of autocracy as unflinchingly as his predecessors. Some disappointment was caused by this utterance, which was based on

the knowledge that human society, like nature, abhors violent revolutions. Reformers are apt to ignore the necessity of respecting the currents of national life. On May 26, 1896, the Coronation was celebrated at Moscow with more than usual pomp. Those who were privileged to witness that splendid pageant were struck with the strange commingling of the East and West, which seems to typify the history of Russia and the bent of her genius. Nor will they soon forget the revulsion of feeling which came a few days later with the catastrophe of the Khodinski Plain. An enormous crowd, struggling to participate in the coronation gifts, was precipitated into some excavations, and upwards of 2,000 were killed and wounded.

In August, 1896, the imperial pair set out on a progress through Europe. They were welcomed by the German Emperor at Berlin, and by Queen Victoria at her Scottish retreat. But their most momentous visit was paid to France at the commencement of October. After reviewing 100,000 troops at Châlons, Nicholas II declared that the Empire and the Republic were united in indissoluble friendship; that the army whose manœuvres he had witnessed was "a powerful support of the principles of equity upon which peace, order, and the well-being of nations were founded." In August 1897 these courtesies were returned by President Faure, accompanied by M. Hanotaux, his Minister of Foreign Affairs. At a banquet on board the French flagship at Cronstadt Nicholas II referred to the two Powers as "friendly and allied," adding that "they were equally resolved to maintain the world's peace in a spirit of right and equity." These words created a profound impression throughout Europe, which was increased by the announcement that France and Russia stood pledged to common action by a treaty. If either Power were attacked the other would assist with the whole of its military and naval strength, and peace could be concluded only in concert between the allies. The results of this consummation of Alexander III's

European policy have hitherto been in the main financial. Events have shown that France cannot reckon on Russia's complicity in acts of aggression. But the alliance has relieved her of the nightmare of German invasion, while Russia has gained freedom from monetary dependence on Berlin. A series of loans was placed on the Paris market, which has served to repay advances made by the State for the construction of railways.

M. Witte's advent to power marked an increased energy in this direction. While the yearly average between 1889 and 1892 was 399 miles, during the rest of the century 1,375 miles of railway were added every year to the European system of Russia. Reliance was at first placed on private enterprise, which was tempted by liberal concessions, and guaranteed interest, generally amounting to five per cent., on the capital invested. But experience has shown that public welfare demands the strictest control. The Government now assumes a virtual monopoly in railway construction, and every year witnesses the purchase of lines owned by private companies. Railways have absorbed £380,000,000 of Russia's foreign indebtedness; and in 1899 the whole extraordinary expenditure, amounting to £12,826,000, was thus absorbed. At the century's close the empire possessed 41,577 miles of permanent way, of which 22,846 were owned by the State. The Tsar is the largest railway proprietor in the world—a fact which should not be forgotten in an estimate of the national assets. The same principle has been extended to rates and fares. In western countries internal commerce is sorely handicapped by the heavy charges entailed by transit. Such was the case with Russia until 1889, when the power of framing tariffs was transferred from the companies to a central board under the Ministry of Finance. In 1894 a great step in advance was made by the adoption of the zone system. This ingenious device was borrowed from Hungary, and is based on the well-established commercial principle of giving a reduction for

quantity. Goods are now divided into twelve classes; and charges for transport vary directly with value. The most costly are conveyed at twopence per ton-mile, the cheapest at a farthing. On the other hand, rates and fares vary inversely with distance. For example, a ton of iron-ore is carried from the Krivoi-Rog field to works in the Donetz valley for '23 of a penny per ton-mile, while the charge for short distances is '316. Passenger traffic is governed by rules framed in a similar spirit; and the fares for long distances are incredibly low when judged from an English standpoint. A peasant may travel over the 3,720 miles between St Petersburg and Irkutsk for £3. Great Britain was the pioneer in railway construction, and other nations have profited by her mistakes. Chief amongst them were the concessions made to private ownership during a period of great industrial activity. The landed classes levied exorbitant compensation; and our home trade is hampered by tariffs demanded by inflated capital expenditure. In this instance the national maxim, *laissez faire*, was too rigidly applied.

The development of communications in European Russia, great as it has been, is eclipsed by the grandiose projects undertaken in her Asiatic possessions. The idea of a Trans-Siberian Railway is due to Count N. N. Muraviev-Amurski, founder of Russian empire in the Far East. It took a practical shape in 1866, when Colonel E. Bogdanovich presented to Alexander II a tracing of a line between Moscow and the Pacific. For a quarter of a century this daring scheme remained in an incubatory stage, but in 1891 work commenced on seven sections simultaneously. In the course of that year the line was carried across the Ural mountains to the western terminus at Cheliabinsk. At the end of March 1899 it was open to traffic as far as Irkutsk, 2029 miles from Cheliabinsk; while, on the eastern section, Vladivostok was linked with Khabarovsk on the Amur. Eight years sufficed for the equipment of 2503 miles, including much difficult bridging; for the railway traverses the vast riverine system of Siberia. Beyond



Irkutsk progress was impeded by Lake Baikal, with an area of 12,000 miles fringed by lofty mountains. The line traced on its southern shore, 157 miles in length, offers considerable engineering difficulties, and it was necessary to traverse forty miles of water which is frozen to a great depth during the long Siberian winter. Regular transit was afforded by an ice-breaker constructed on the spot by Messrs Armstrong of Newcastle, which carries four loaded trains. It was originally intended to follow the Amur to the sea, and with this end in view the line was pushed forward to Stretensk, 603 miles east of Lake Baikal, whence communication is kept up by steamer with Khabarovsk. At the close of the century the entire route by rail and steamer between Cheliabinsk and the Pacific ports of Vladivostok and Nikolaievsk was open to traffic. Events in China led to a change of design. A ukase of December 23, 1896, authorised the formation of the Eastern China Railway Company, consisting exclusively of Russian and Chinese shareholders. The line which it undertook leaves the Trans-Siberian Railway at Kaidalovo, 440 miles east of Lake Baikal, and strikes south-eastwards across the Chinese province of Manchuria to Kharbin. At this point it bifurcates, one branch extending to Vladivostok and a second to Mukden, Niuchwang, Port Arthur, and Talienwan, renamed Dalny, on the Gulf of Pechili. A special clause in the 80 years' concession obtained at Peking permits Russia to maintain troops for the protection of the line, and thus gives her control over the cradle of the imperial dynasty. The Eastern China Railway, which has a length of 1596 miles, will provide a more direct route to the Pacific than one which follows the Amur in its windings; and the southern terminus, unlike Vladivostok, is never blocked by ice. These substantial advantages were far from satisfying the Tsar's advisers. Surveys were in progress in 1900 for another branch which will connect Peking with a point on the trunk line 120 miles east of Lake Baikal. It is anticipated that the entire system, extending over 5542 miles, will be open to traffic in 1905.

This stupendous undertaking cannot fail to work a revolution in the world's economy. Russia gains an outlet for her commerce on the Pacific coast, and satisfies her craving for open ports and warmer waters. China with her frugal, persistent, and laborious population, is placed in direct touch with western markets, and can embark on the struggle for commercial supremacy which is the key-note of the dawning century. The time and cost of transit between Europe and the far-East are reduced by fifty per cent. The peasants of Russia's over-peopled provinces may gratify their instinct for colonisation, which lies at the root of her expansion. Between 1887 and 1895 the emigrants to Siberia averaged 32,000; in 1900 219,000 left their exhausted fields for the fertile prairies of the east. This great dependency was long believed to be an Arctic desert, suitable only to serve as a limbo for Russia's political and criminal exiles. The further knowledge derived from railway exploration has shown that Siberia does not differ materially from our North American possessions. Southwards of the Tundra, a zone of frozen swamp, is one which has stores of mineral wealth; and still further south is a belt of deep loam which may become the granary of the world. In the daring which gave it birth and the potentialities brought into play, the Trans-Siberian Railway eclipses all previous efforts of the engineer.

While enterprise was displayed on a colossal scale in the north, the interests of Central Asia were not neglected. In 1898 extensions of the Trans-Caspian Railway from Samarkand to Tashkent and Andijan, 421 miles in length, were opened to traffic. Another branch of 192 miles was completed which runs southwards from Merv to the frontier of Afghanistan. Its terminus, the Russian fortress of Kushk, is 80 miles from Herat; and 438 miles, which present no difficulties for the engineer, separate the Russian railway system from Chaman, the British Indian terminus north of Quetta. If this insignificant gap were bridged, Karachi would be brought within a

week's journey from London. In view of linking the Trans-Siberian with the Central Asian trunk-lines, surveys were undertaken in 1900 for a railway between Orenburg and Tashkent, a distance of 1150 miles; and work was commenced at each extremity. It is impossible to forecast the ultimate result of these operations. Railways have worked a revolution in British India; and the twentieth century will see changes on a vaster scale arising from their extension over the Asiatic continent.

Among the causes of Rome's decline and fall was the chaotic condition of her currency. In Russia, too, commerce was paralysed by violent oscillations in the monetary unit. Between 1877 and 1896 the exchange value of the ruble ranged from 1*s.* 7*d.* to 2*s.* 9*d.*, and the fluctuations were so frequent that merchants were often at their wits' end. In 1894 M. S. J. Witte attacked this evil at its source—the Berlin Stock Exchange. He fixed the value of the hundred-ruble note at 216 marks in German currency. On this basis he bought freely for “forward” delivery until he was master of the situation and held the brokers at his mercy. Thenceforward the unscrupulous gambling ceased, and the ruble gained comparative fixity. At the same time an immense contraction took place in the Empire's paper currency. In January 1892, the notes in circulation amounted to 1,121,000,000 rubles. This aggregate was gradually reduced to 630,000,000; and a vast gold reserve was accumulated. Thus was the way prepared for a consummation of the currency reforms begun by Alexander III. A ukase of November 26, 1897, ordained that issues in excess of 600,000,000 rubles must be represented by gold lodged in the Imperial Bank. Every note now bears an intimation that it is convertible for gold. The precious metal, in pieces of seven and a half and fifteen rubles, became the legal standard; and a sufficient supply has been issued to provide for all the Empire's requirements. Thus the unit has acquired a stability unknown in Russian annals; and while paper-money is no longer in use except for large transactions, the pound

sterling exchanges for 9'4575 paper rubles, and the gold ruble for 3s. 2d.

A reform of even greater importance was the regulation of the liquor traffic. Russian peasants are more given to intoxication than the same class in other northern countries. They will barter their crops and seed-grain for fiery corn-spirit. The faltering steps taken to cope with this national vice have already been related. It was an admitted fact that the legislation of 1885 was but a half measure. Noxious stuff was still retailed, and it was in the vendor's interest to tempt his customer to drink. A series of ukases between 1894 and 1898 gave the State a monopoly in the manufacture and sale of spirits; and in January 1901, the system was extended to the whole Empire. The result has been a decline in consumption, which must add appreciably to the peasant's happiness and to his ability to withstand famine. In 1867 every Russian subject absorbed 1'669 gallons of raw spirit annually. In 1897, before the new liquor-laws were in full operation, the average consumption fell to '93 of a gallon, as compared with 1'03 in Great Britain and 1'01 in the United States. This splendid reform was not founded in any considerations of financial profit; but, despite a vast expenditure in providing wholesome recreation for the peasant class, the spirit monopoly gave a net profit of £4,000,000 in 1901.

Thus the concluding decade of the century saw currency placed on a gold basis, and a determined effort made to check the wastage produced by excessive drinking. It is equally memorable in Russian history for the immense stimulus given to industrial enterprise. Until 1892 the demand for foreign capital met with inadequate response. In that year the allurements of a high protective tariff and the enthusiasm aroused in France by the Russian alliance produced an influx of promoters, eager to exploit the latent wealth of the southern provinces. Public companies were formed by the score in Paris, and registered in Brussels, in view of securing the immunity from

control offered by the commercial laws of Belgium. The capital thus invested in works for producing steel alone was upwards of £19,000,000. But speculators, in too many instances, forgot that success in Russia is governed by the same conditions as in other countries. They threw prudence to the winds, and sought only to gain immediate fortunes by manipulating their shares on the stock exchange. Factories were built on unsuitable sites; extravagance was displayed in equipments and the remuneration of staffs; and working-capital was cut down to a point which rendered profitable working almost impossible. So vast was the demand for metal goods owing to the activity of railway construction, that the punishment earned by such short-sighted folly was slow in coming. But the conditions established were too artificial to endure. In 1900 the Government, which purchased 40 per cent. of the new products, largely reduced its orders for railway material. This step was attributed to the stringency in the money-market caused by the South African War, to the expenditure entailed by operations in China, and to a recurrence of unsatisfactory harvests. Whatever may have been its cause, the cessation of demand produced a commercial crisis in Southern Russia. Unsound undertakings collapsed, while the better-managed were compelled to practise severe economy. That Russia offers a most promising field to foreign capital, if only it be administered with ordinary foresight, is proved by the fact that, in 1901, 580 joint-stock companies declared dividends averaging 10·1 per cent. on an aggregate capital of £105,000,000. The pioneer in the metallurgical industry of Southern Russia was Mr John Hughes, who in 1869 established works at a place now bearing his name in the Krivoi-Rog ironfields. With this exception, Baku on the Caspian shore alone tempted British capital. Four companies registered in London, with a total share and debenture capital of £4,835,000, are engaged in pumping and refining petroleum there. The yield from the Caucasus deposits in 1899 was 2,167,800,000 gallons, or about 60,000,000 barrels more than

that of the United States. In the following year a serious decline in prices set in, due to over-production and the crisis in Southern Russia, but the intrinsic soundness of these undertakings is beyond all question.

A retrospect of Russian economy in the nineteenth century affords very striking results. If 100 be taken to represent the volume of foreign trade between 1800 and 1825, the corresponding figures for the succeeding quarters are 189, 467, and 972. The increase in population during the century was 201 per cent. The time has not yet come for estimating the economic and social influence exerted by M. Witte's policy. It is still in the experimental stage; and while manufacturers regard the Government as their chief customer, the enterprise called into being by that great statesman can hardly be said to be in a healthy condition. The growth of industries unconnected with agriculture tends to swell the urban population: in 1897 the first regular census taken of the Empire showed twelve cities with more than 100,000 inhabitants, against six only in 1870. The change must also add to the importance of the middle classes; which already number nine per cent. of the population, and on the analogy offered by the rest of Europe, political and social influence may, in time, be shifted to sections which engross the national wealth. Signs are not wanting that this process has begun. The nobility are yearly losing ground, and their impoverishment is one of the many problems which perplex the central administration. At the opposite side of the scale we find an increasing army of artisans, whose ranks are recruited from the agricultural classes. Every peasant may now demand a passport from his commune entitling him to leave his village for a year, irrespective of the tax-collector's demands. But the Russian operative has not yet cast off the slough of serfdom. He is patient, docile, and content with low wages, but lacks initiative and education. Such material offers a promising field to the socialist, whose doctrines are making some headway in central

Europe. The strikes which occur from time to time at centres of industry in the South are due to this dangerous propaganda. Much will depend upon the scope given to the unrivalled commercial aptitudes of M. Witte. He has bitter foes among the official caste, which was called into being by Peter the Great, and has grown in power during the last two reigns. Its model was avowedly the bureaucracy formed by Louis XIV in order to counteract the influence wielded by a feudal aristocracy; and both institutions weigh heavily on the progress of the countries in which they were evolved. A policy which aims at recasting the internal economy of an Empire needs time for its operation, and Russians must await the outcome of these far-seeing designs with patience and a trust in their own resources.

Passing from Nicholas II's internal administration to his treatment of the conquered provinces which fringe Russia proper, we find it generally characterised by moderation and sympathy. No effort has been spared to heal the wounds of Poland. The year 1897 saw the repeal of a ukase of 1885, which forbade landowners to dispose of their estates to any purchasers not of Russian blood. The surviving victims of the insurrection of 1863 were released or amnestied. A truce was called in the proscription of the Polish language and the Catholic religion; and the press gained a large share of liberty. The prosperity of Poland has grown amazingly, for German manufacturers have crossed the frontier in swarms, with a view to securing the benefit of the high protective tariff. Many Polish towns exhibit a rate of increase which can be paralleled only in the United States and our Australian Colonies. Warsaw, for instance, had 243,000 citizens in 1865. Thirty-two years later it was the third trade centre of the Empire, with a population of 615,000. That of Lodz has increased in the interval from 12,000 to 315,000. The Tsar has shown an inclination to draw a distinction between the provinces belonging to the kingdom created in 1815 and others which are Polish only in

sympathies. The dogma of unity is still observed in Russia's treatment of Lithuania, Podolia, and Volhynia; but religious persecution has been definitely abandoned. The Baltic Provinces have regained a measure of their old autonomy; and in April, 1897, a commission was appointed with orders to devise some means of enabling the nobility to maintain their position. The German colonies in Bessarabia and Southern Russia have been protected against an attempt to impose Russian on the village schools. In 1896, Siberia received all the administrative and judicial mechanism which is current in Russia proper. This huge dependency has hitherto suffered from the canker which so long afflicted our colonies in Australia. In May, 1899, a commission began the task of finding a substitute for transportation to Siberia. When finances admit of the expenditure, the penal colonies, which are a source of moral contagion, will be replaced by central prisons erected at the head-quarters of every province.

Finland alone chafes under the bonds linking her with Russia. The Grand-Duchy, which extends over 144,000 square miles of forest, lake, and granite rock, has been aptly styled the Russian Scotland. In the struggle for existence with an ungrateful soil and a climate of Arctic severity, a hardy breed has been evolved which is famous for its culture and tenacity of purpose. Finlanders are at least thirty years in advance of their Russian fellow-subjects in all the appliances of material civilisation. Nearly a quarter of the population is under some sort of instruction. Their country has no mineral wealth, but its forests are among the main sources of the world's supply of timber and paper material. The foreign trade in 1898 exceeded £16,680,000—nearly £6. 8s. *od.* per head of the inhabitants. This abounding prosperity is the fruit of Russian protection. Representative institutions, comparative immunity from military and fiscal burdens—such advantages are enjoyed by Finland alone of all the Empire's dependencies. But, in the exuberant national spirit evoked by Alexander II's



concessions, his *protégés* were not always mindful of their neighbour's susceptibilities. They were justly proud of a superior civilisation, and prone to treat the giant Empire on terms of equality. Thus the jealousy of Old-Russians was excited. Orthodoxy clamoured against the license accorded to Lutheran ministers and the fusion of religious with political aspirations. The Russian army and bureaucracy pined for a share of the Finnish loaves and fishes; Russian traders complained of the injury wrought by smugglers. And the Tsar was led by deep reasons of state to turn a willing ear to the promptings of the Conservative press. Finland has a close but occult sympathy with Sweden, the source of her culture; and a war between Russia and Germany would certainly not find Sweden on the Russian side. A sparsely-peopled territory, stretching within a few miles of St Petersburg, might, under conceivable circumstances, prove a weak spot in Russia's defensive armour.

Symptoms of a reactionary treatment of the Grand-Duchy were not wanting in the reign of Alexander III. His son gave, at his accession, the customary undertaking to "confirm and ratify the Fundamental Laws and maintain them steadfastly in force"; but Finlanders saw a presage of approaching danger to their cherished institutions in the resignation of the Grand-Ducal Secretary of State in June, 1898. Six months earlier, General Alexis Kurapatkin, who had governed Transcaspia with signal ability, became Minister of War at St Petersburg. His ardour for reform was shown in a reorganisation of the artillery, and it prompted him to revert to Count Miliutin's abortive project of assimilating the conditions of military service in Finland and Russia. That there was ample room for improvement in that direction was admitted on all sides. The Finnish army was governed by the Military Service Law of December 27, 1878, the essential provisions of which could be altered only with the approval of the four Estates. It declared the duty of Finnish soldiers to be the defence of the

Fatherland, and reserved office of all descriptions in the army for natives of the Grand-Duchy. The local forces were commanded by the Governor-General, who in this respect was subordinate to the Minister of War; but administrative details were managed by a Committee of the Finnish Senate. Nor were the privileges enjoyed by Finlanders confined to virtual independence of the central authority. The anomalies sanctioned by the law of 1878 are shown in the following statement :—

	<i>Finland</i>	<i>Russian Empire</i>
Period of service with the colours.....	3 years	5 years
Percentage of annual contingent to total of youths of military age .....	9·6	36
Percentage of military expenditure to total revenue.....	16	28
Cost of army per head of the population...	1·35 rubles	2·83 rubles

The Finnish army mustered 5,821, including a small body of volunteers, and was organised in eight battalions and a dragoon regiment. There was, besides, a reserve of 9,000 men, bringing the war strength up to 15,000, but its value as a fighting machine was very small.

Soon after his accession to power, General Kurapatkin procured the appointment of a committee of the General Staff, to elaborate plans for remodelling the army of Finland. In August, 1898, General Bobrikov was despatched to Helsingfors as Governor-General, with instructions to bring about the closest union between the Grand-Duchy and the common Fatherland. The selection of an agent for so delicate a task was not altogether a happy one. General Bobrikov is a soldier, ignorant of Finnish language and customs, and unversed in diplomatic wiles. He had to deal with a people which is destitute of a sense of humour, steadfast in affections and hatred, and which displays the sensitiveness seen in all communities whose culture is of recent date. Such natures may

be led by tact and sympathy: and in point of fact the loyalty of Finland has never been open to question. To dragoon them into obedience is impossible.

The tempest burst on January 24th, 1899, when an Extraordinary Diet was called together to discuss an ordinance for the reorganisation of the army, based on the Committee's proposals, in supersession of the Law of December 27, 1878. Its preamble asserted that the homogeneity of the Russian army required identical regulations for filling the ranks in war and peace; and set forth the fundamental principles of the new measure. Finnish regiments were to be controlled by the Russian Minister of War and commanded by the chief of the Finnish Military District. The military staffs of the Governor-General and all other distinctive offices were abolished. The officers of the local battalions were to be supplemented by others of Russian origin. An appendix set forth the instructions given to the Committee, which amounted to a denial of the validity of the constitution and of the political rights guaranteed in 1809. The same tendency was shown in the introduction of the oath imposed by law on the Russian army, which, of course, ignores the existence of Finland and the Tsar's Grand-ducal title. In the following May two additional "Gracious Propositions" were laid before the Estates, which raised the period of service to five years with the colours and fifteen with the reserve, and assimilated the annual levy of recruits with the system current in Russia. After supplying wastage in the Finnish contingent, the remainder were to be drafted into Russian regiments serving in Finland and the St Petersburg Military District. An abridgement of the period of active service was in future to be granted only on the presentation of a certificate of knowledge of the Russian language. At the same time the local contribution for military purposes was equalised with the ratio enforced in Russia. These changes were to be gradually introduced; their ultimate effect being reached in ten years, when the army on a peace

footing would be nearly 20,000 strong: and its annual cost 10,191,664 Finnish marks exchanging at tenpence.

The Diet elected two committees to study these proposals. Their reports admitted that the reserves were not properly constituted; that the military burden falling upon the people of Finland should be brought into greater conformity with that which Russia endured; and that the army should participate in the defence of the empire at large. With these reservations, the Estates rejected the Military Service Bill and submitted a counter-project which would raise the Finnish forces in nine years to 12,480 men, including a contribution to the Russian army of 5,280. They did not attempt to appraise the financial obligations involved; but put forward as a condition that the revenue should not be diminished in the interval by any serious interference with the customs' tariff. They proposed that Finnish troops should, in time of war, be primarily employed in defending their own country. Exception was taken to the scope of the measure as a whole, on the score that it involved political aims which would destroy Finland's constitution and therefore warp her development. The Bill, it was urged, lacked reverence for existing laws; and in their passion for uniformity the Russian authorities had ignored essential differences between the manners and modes of thought current in Russia and Finland. Notwithstanding these protests, the Military Service Law was duly promulgated, and will come into force in 1903.

The excitement which this measure aroused ran to fever height with the appearance, on February 15, 1899, of an imperial manifesto which recast the entire legislative system. It was founded on the report of a commission, in which the ruling spirit was M. Pobiedonostsev, a pillar of Russian orthodoxy, who is the leading spirit in the Holy Synod. Under the procedure hitherto in force, enactments were framed under the Grand Duke's eye in consultation with the Secretary of State for Finland, and were then forwarded to the Senate sitting at

Helsingfors, through the Grand-Ducal Chancellery. After examining the new Bill from a legal aspect, the Senate passed it on to the Diet, which might approve, modify or reject it. Should the subject-matter involve alterations in any fundamental law, the consent of the four Estates was obligatory. If the Bill passed through the Diet, it returned through customary channels to the Grand Duke, by whom it was signed and promulgated. Should the measure be rejected by the Diet, or the sovereign disapprove of amendments introduced, the matter dropped.

The manifesto of February 15 declared that the progress of Finland was dependent upon its intimate union with the empire. Under its provisions all Bills are in future to be drafted by the Ministry in whose province the subject-matter falls, with the aid of the Finnish Secretary of State. They will then come before the Tsar for his sanction; and be passed on to the Finnish Senate, whose opinion as to their purport will be invited. In the case of measures relating solely to Finland the Diet is also to be consulted.

The procedure imposed by the manifesto was regarded by Finlanders as an invasion of their constitutional right to be governed by enactments of their own framing. An agitation set in, which was the more imposing because it was attended by no disorder whatever. The Governor-General's rejoinder was an increase in the rigour of the press-censors; and by way of pointing an obvious moral, the Finnish postal system was amalgamated with that of Russia. A vigorous protest was made by the Senate, which pointed out that the manifesto contemplated alterations in fundamental laws which could be effected only by the unanimous consent of the Diet. The Marshal of Nobility and Speakers of the other Estates journeyed to St Petersburg to lay their objections before the Grand Duke. They were not received; and the same fate attended a petition supported by 500,000 Finlanders, whose signatures were obtained in ten days, despite great distances and rigorous weather.

Now began a paper war which spread through Europe. The

legists and University professors of every country laboured to prove that Finland was a Sovereign State, and possessed an international status which even the Tsar of Russia was powerless to destroy. The literature of this controversy would fill a library. Many of the arguments employed are inapplicable; for the status of Finland in the European comity of nations has no parallel. Some attributes of sovereignty have been enjoyed by the Grand-Duchy—a constitution, laws, an army, currency, customs tariff, and (until December, 1899) a postal service of its own. To other essentials of sovereignty, as laid down in the Law of Nations, it can lay no claim. Finland has neither a fleet nor a mercantile flag: the control of its army and foreign relations has always been in Russian hands. The only parallel is found in certain Indian feudatory states, which are now accepted as necessary incidents in our imperial system. While the partisans of Finnish claims have shown some want of balance, the attitude taken up by champions of the Russian cause is hardly more defensible. They strive to minimise and explain away the concessions freely granted by Alexander I and Alexander II, which amounted to a recognition of Finland's separate constitutional existence. Advocates on the Russian side would have taken firmer ground had they fallen back upon the maxim *salus populi suprema lex*, and argued that privileges conferred by one Tsar of Russia may legitimately be curtailed by another, should the common weal demand a closer union between the great family of nations which own his sceptre. It is impossible to avoid a conviction that faults have been committed on both sides. Perfervid patriotism has led Finlanders to forget past favours and the wisdom of conciliating their mighty neighbour. Russia, too, might probably have secured all her aims by adopting strictly legal methods, and appealing to the steadfast loyalty of the Finnish people.

The foreign policy of Nicholas II is based on a recognition of the line of expansion marked out by nature for the forces

at his command. He is fully alive to the intrigues against his influence fomented by German rivals at Constantinople, and is aware that Serbia gravitates towards Austria-Hungary. But the true interests of Russia are not concerned in the paltry revolutions of the Balkans; and her path to Constantinople is barred by the Christian communities which owe to her their political existence. The tendency to meddle in the affairs of the peninsula, which placed his father in so embarrassing a position, finds no countenance with the present Tsar. In Serbia the interests of Russia and Austria-Hungary were defined by an agreement (1897). In Bulgaria, the murder of the anti-Russian premier, Stambulov, on July 18, 1895, paved the way for a reconciliation with the Slav Empire. When the infant heir-apparent was admitted into the Greek Church (January, 1896), the Tsar was represented at his baptism, and Tirnovo bristled with Russian flags. In March Prince Ferdinand was recognised as ruler of Bulgaria by all the great Powers, and was appointed by the Sultan as Governor-General of Rumelia. In the following month he met with a royal reception at St Petersburg, and obtained assurances of his protector's friendship.

The principle of European concert was strictly observed in Russia's dealings with Greece. That little bankrupt State was ostensibly ruled by the Tsar's uncle, King George; but all real power centred in the *Ethnike Hetairia*, a secret society which aimed at wresting the colonies of ancient Hellas from the Turks. In May, 1896, the smouldering hatred of Musulman for Christian in Crete burnt into a flame; and tales of massacre spread through Greece, exciting the whole population to frenzy. The King saw that he must yield to the general clamour for intervention or be swept from his throne. In spite of collective remonstrances from Europe, a mass-meeting at Athens proclaimed the union of Crete with Greece. In February, 1897, a flotilla under Prince George landed troops on the island, who threw themselves into a fortified monastery and summoned the Christian population to rise against their

Turkish oppressors. A truce was called by the combined action of the great Powers. Greece was informed that she would not be permitted to annex the island, which would receive autonomous government under the Sultan's suzerainty. She was summoned to recall her forces forthwith; and the demand was enforced by a blockade and a joint occupation of the principal strategic points. Prince George was paralysed by the display of irresistible force, and he reluctantly evacuated his position. But the spirit let loose by the Hetairia was by no means quelled. In April, 1897, an ill-disciplined army, 80,000 strong, mustered under the Crown Prince for the invasion of Turkish Thessaly. On crossing the frontier they encountered a force of 150,000 men, fashioned by German instructors; and after severe fighting were hurled across the frontier (May 19). But for an armistice imposed by Europe on the victorious Turks, the whole of Greece would have been overrun. The kingdom was saved from punishment merited by its folly by the Tsar's intercession with Sultan Abdul Hamid. A treaty of peace was signed at Constantinople on December 4, 1897, which secured for the Turks a slight rectification of frontier. The war indemnity amounting to £T4,000,000, payable to Turkey, was raised by a loan under the guarantee of Russia, Great Britain, and France. These Powers showed a disposition to adopt common action in the near-East. It was owing to pressure exercised by them that the Sultan accepted Prince George of Greece as his High Commissioner for the affairs of Crete (March, 1899). Another group was formed by Germany, which had gained a dominant position at Constantinople as the price of her assistance in reorganising the army, and by her friendly attitude during the Greek war. Her lead was followed by Austria-Hungary and Italy, under the terms of the Triple Alliance, which afforded secret support to the Turkish policy of obstruction and delays.

While Christians and Musulmans were struggling for mastery in the Levant, Anatolia was the scene of far graver



disorders. Armenians are spread over eight provinces of Asiatic Turkey, and muster strongly in adjoining districts of the Russian Caucasus. Subtle, ingenious, and possessing marked proclivities for commerce and intrigue, this curious race dreams of restoring the Empire which it once enjoyed under Tiridates. In 1894 the Armenians came to blows with the Kurds, an untutored people subsisting by their flocks and herds, with occasional lapses into pillage. The Turkish garrisons naturally sided with their co-religionists; and massacres of the Armenian population took place which aroused intense indignation in England. Public opinion in this country ran strongly in favour of Armenian autonomy; but Prince Lobanov scouted the idea, as involving danger to peace in the southern Caucasus. In May, 1895, however, the ambassadors of Russia, England, and France presented a scheme of reform to the Porte, suggesting the appointment of a High Commissioner for Armenia, the abolition of judicial torture, and extensive changes in the oppressive fiscal system. This was adopted by the Sultan, who sent Shakir Pasha as Commissioner to govern the Armenian provinces. His arrival was the signal for further disorders. Thousands of Armenians were slaughtered in cold blood, and their towns were reduced to ashes. The rebellion spread to Constantinople, where an Armenian Revolutionary Committee organised a demonstration which plunged the capital into anarchy and led to a change of ministers (October 1895).

In the meantime a profound impression was made in England by the reports of Armenian atrocities published in *The Times*, which found vent in a resolution of sympathy with this unhappy people passed by the House of Commons on March 3, 1896. Encouraged by this moral support, the Revolutionary Committee incited a knot of desperate men to seize the Ottoman Bank (Aug. 26), as a method of calling attention to their grievances. The conspirators were compelled to evacuate the building, and found refuge on an English yacht; but this

insane attempt stirred Musulman fanaticism to its depths. More than 5,000 Armenians were slaughtered by Turkish troops, and the streets of Pera ran with blood. A panic fell upon Constantinople, and trade came to a standstill. Though the Sultan's apathy elicited remonstrances from the Powers, the real character of their dangerous *protégés* became so apparent that European sympathy grew colder. Russia dreaded the aggrandisement of so turbulent a race, and in June, 1898, she demanded from Turkey the repatriation of 40,000 Armenians who had spread over the southern Caucasus. Germany was too intent on securing concessions from the Porte to add to its many embarrassments, and England soon had her hands full in South Africa. Armenians and Kurds were therefore left to settle their own differences, and Turkish reforms proved as nebulous as they invariably are.

While Russia watched the results of Ottoman misrule on her European frontiers her main attention was engrossed by the march of events in Asia. The long-standing dispute with Great Britain as to the North-western boundary of Afghanistan had been set at rest by the joint Commission of 1885-6. There remained a vast stretch of debateable land on the Pamirs, a tangle of peaks and highland valleys which lies between Russian Turkestan and a sphere of influence claimed by the Indian Government by virtue of its suzerainty over Kashmir. Between 1889 and 1894 some friction was caused by Russian exploration in the Pamirs, and by radical differences of opinion with regard to the North-eastern frontier of Afghanistan. This was placed by British geographers at the Murghab, a branch of the Upper Oxus; while Russia laid claim to the territories of Roshan, Shignan and Wakhan, which lie southwards of that river and were tributaries of Kokand before its annexation. The success attending joint action in 1885 led to an agreement which was signed in March 1895, and provided for the appointment of a Pamirs Boundary Commission, consisting of Russian, English, and Afghan delegates.

They met on Lake Victoria, a wild mountain tarn which is the source of the Oxus, and completed their surveys in September 1895, when a convention was executed which settled all points at issue. The Russian frontier was defined by the River Panj—a local name of the Upper Oxus—as far as Killa Panja in the Wakhan Hills. It then followed the Sankit range until the western boundary of Chinese Turkestan is reached. Thus Russia obtained nearly the whole of Roshan and Shignan, with a portion of Wakhan and a commanding position with regard to neighbouring states. The “Buffer” principle, which was a marked characteristic of Gorchakov’s Central Asian policy, was maintained in the allotment to Afghanistan of a strip of Wakhan territory, in some places barely 14 miles broad, which separates the Russian from the English sphere of influence. The friendship which sprung up between the commissioners of the two Powers was even more noteworthy than in 1885. Every lover of peace will re-echo the hope expressed by the Russian delegate at a banquet given by him on September 11, 1895, to celebrate the successful issue of the enterprise, that “the agreement just concluded would be the beginning of more cordial relations between the two countries, and of a better understanding of national aims and desires.”

The measures taken by Russia to consolidate her influence in Asia by railway construction have been already narrated. It remains to sketch the administrative steps adopted with the same object in view. In December 1897, General A. Kurapatkin, Governor of Transcaspia, was transferred to the greater post of War Minister; and the province which he had ruled so wisely became a part of Turkestan. With Bokhara and Khiva virtually portions of her Empire, the Turkoman tribes brought to heel, and the raw cottons of Central Asia exchanging for Russian products and tea imported by way of Batum, the position of Russia in Central Asia is overwhelmingly strong. But the horizon is by no means free from clouds. In June 1898, the unrest which permeates Islam from Borneo

to Morocco found an echo in the remotest district of Turkestan. A detachment of troops encamped at Andijan, in Ferghana, was suddenly assailed by a mob of fanatics, and 22 soldiers lost their lives. This movement was suppressed with the severity always employed by Russians in dealing with the beginnings of revolt. While the education of youth in Central Asia remains in the hands of Mohammedan priests, the Tsar's officers must expect manifestations of the spirit which aims at restoring a theocracy under the ideals of the Koran.

Russians and Englishmen have identical problems before them in the attitude of Islam. Like King Edward VII, the Tsar of Russia has more Musulman subjects than the Commander of the Faithful himself. According to the census of 1897 they numbered 13,707,745; but an estimate which is more worthy of credence places the total at 17,756,000. Russian Musulmans offer an almost infinite variety of race, but all are ranged in six categories: Tatars, Turks, Kirghiz, Persians, Caucasian highlanders, and Turkomans. Some amongst them exhibit the highest qualities. The Turks—with whom the mongrel oligarchy established at Constantinople must not be confounded—are brave, honest, and law-abiding. The Tatars are skilled artisans, devoted to duty, and possess a high standard of sobriety and chastity. The Caucasian tribesmen have shown marvellous steadfastness and some capacity for self-government. Yet all are unprogressive, poor, and ignorant; and constitute, taken together, a comparatively neglected section of the Tsar's family of nations. The blame of the isolation lies to some extent on themselves. Their evolution has been checked by their inability to fall in with the altered conditions arising from their incorporation in a great Christian empire. The most salient point of friction is to be found in the administration of justice. The system established in Central Asia fails to satisfy the conscience of the native, which has been moulded by study of the Koran; and he takes a secret revenge by deceiving the alien judges. This attitude is unwarranted by

the tenets of Islam. That the latter is not incompatible with the highest civilisation is proved by the glories of Moorish Spain. It is, indeed, a creed with many noble features; inculcating submission to God's decrees, the brotherhood of man, and the superiority of a life of contemplation and research over the feverish pursuit of wealth. Islam, in fact, offers an antidote to the false ideals which lie at the root of the unrest pervading the Western world. Nor is there, *à priori*, any defect in the Russian administrative system which tends to depress the legitimate aspirations of Mohammedans. It is tolerant, almost to a fault, and offers a career to any Mohammedan who can conquer his inherited prejudices. The isolation of the followers of the Prophet in both communities is, perhaps, due to lessons learnt in early youth from the priesthood, who are inveterate foes of Christian rule, and to memories of their vanished empire, contrasted with their hopeless subjugation. It is also attributable to some want of sympathy in the governing class. The religious antagonism which produced the Crusades has by no means spent its force; and Russians cannot forget that for two and a half centuries their ancestors groaned under a Tatar yoke. Civilisation would gain by a more generous treatment of Asiatic Musulmans, and by a persistent effort to utilise the splendid qualities which many of them undoubtedly possess.

A weak point in the Empire in Central Asia built up by Russia is the absence of communication with the ocean. She has striven to supply this want on the North-east by constructing the Trans-Siberian railway, and has left no stone unturned to obtain an outlet seawards through Persia. This policy brought about a financial struggle with Great Britain. In 1892 the Imperial Bank of Persia, which is directed from London, advanced the Government £500,000 on the security of the customs dues collected in Southern ports. But the British Minister at Teheran was unable to maintain the prestige enjoyed by some of his predecessors. In 1898 the Shah sought a further advance from the same source, but the negotiations

came to an abrupt conclusion at a hint from St Petersburg. In January 1900 the Bank of Persian Loans was founded by the Russian Government on the same principle as that of the Eastern China Railway Company. This institution lent the Shah £2,375,000, a portion of which went to liquidate the debt due to the English bank. The security was the Persian import duties, and this brilliant stroke of policy has placed the custom-houses on the northern frontier under Russian control. The relations resulting from commerce have been strengthened by a network of communications. A branch line connects Tiflis with a point on the Persian border east of Erivan, whence roads adapted to carry rails stretch to Resht on the Caspian, Tabriz, and Teheran. Askabad, the capital of Transcaspia, is already linked with Meshed, the commercial *entrepôt* of Northern Persia, which is a close preserve for Russian traders. Indeed, so completely has the spirit of the people been broken by misgovernment that a couple of Cossack regiments might march without resistance to Teheran. Russia's object in dominating her feeble neighbour is connected with schemes for extending her railway system southwards. Surveys have been made for lines to Isfahan and Bandar Abbas, at the entrance of the Persian Gulf. Here, however, a direct conflict of interests has arisen with Great Britain, which has a virtual monopoly of the carrying trade in these waters and dreads the policy of commercial exclusion which always follows the Russian flag in Central Asia. It is incumbent on the rival Powers to find a *modus vivendi*, based on engagements undertaken by both, to respect the integrity and independence of Persia.

During the closing years of the century a more subtle antagonist than England, and one which is less beset by the storms and quicksands of party government, has entered the lists in Persia. Every Russian who is able to think for himself looks with some suspicion on his German neighbours. He admits his obligations to the Teutonic element in the Baltic Provinces, and the long succession of adventurers from

central Europe who have placed their swords and trained intellect at the service of the Tsars. Slavs are capable of fiery enthusiasm but are prone to day-dreams and fits of depression. The German's qualities and defects are the very antithesis of these. He is supple, exact, plodding, and highly educated. Nicholas I had a marked predilection for German officers; and in the case of his successor the preference was strengthened by family ties. A law of sociology seems to decree that success in war brings with it commercial predominance. That of 1870 led to a vast expansion of German trade, which was fed by the indemnity of £200,000,000 exacted from the conquered side. The Russian frontier was crossed by a crowd of manufacturers eager to reap the benefit of the high protective tariff. A reaction against German influence came with Alexander III, whose family instincts were generally subordinated to public ends. The spirit to which he gave so vast an impulse aims at making Russia self-sufficing. Gradually she emancipated herself from financial subservience to Berlin, and found in France the means of developing her resources. Slavophilism, which gained new force in Russia during the last reign, was met by Pan-Germanism, which dreams of absorbing the greater part of Austria-Hungary, the Baltic Provinces of Russia, two-thirds of Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, and even north-eastern France. These designs, which are not without an ethnological basis, are supported by a consistent policy of naval expansion, which is directed at securing sea-power for the German Empire. The clash of Pan-Germanism and Slavophilism has undoubtedly widened the gulf between the two communities; and the espionage maintained by German stewards, professional men, and traders reminds Russians disagreeably of similar manœuvres which heralded the Franco-Prussian War. Pan-Germanism, encouraged by the Kaiser Wilhelm, has vaster designs in view. His realm is poorly endowed by nature; its mineral wealth and sea-board are on a restricted scale. But his subjects are thrifty,

laborious, and well equipped for the industrial battle ; and they are multiplying in a ratio which threatens to outstrip the means of subsistence. An empire founded on blood and iron is restrained by no scruples when its existence is at stake. It seeks access for surplus population and products to warmer waters than those of the North Sea and the Baltic, and sees the long-desired outlet in the Eastern Mediterranean and Persian Gulf. To this policy are due the efforts made by Germany to secure predominance at Constantinople. They were promoted by a close understanding with Rumania, which was alienated from Russia by racial differences and the memories of the bitter disappointment of 1878. By an agreement with King Charles, who is a scion of the House of Hohenzollern, the Kaiser secured in 1898 direct railway and steamer communication between Berlin and Constantinople by way of Bucharest and Constanza, on the Black Sea. The Sultan, too, found in his northern ally a confidant in all disputes with the rest of Europe. In return for this moral support he showered concessions of all kinds on German subjects, and granted them large tracts in Asia Minor as a field for colonisation. In December 1899 a long step was taken towards the consummation of these designs. A German company obtained the exclusive right of constructing a railway between Konia—which was already connected by rail with Haidar Pasha on the Bosphorus—and the head of the Persian Gulf. The proposed terminus, Koweit, is admirably suited to serve as a commercial and naval centre. Thus Germany has gained a firm footing on the right flank of the Russian advance. The designs of the two Empires are irreconcilable, for the land-borne trade of India, which is their goal, cannot support competing railway lines.

Stress has been laid on the fact that the present Tsar is averse from independent action in the near-East. His predecessors were moved by abstract sentiment to plunge into wars of aggression which gave them little save the right of



navigating a sea whose outlet was under foreign control. Nicholas II perceived that the sphere of human energy is increased many-fold by railways, and that the Pacific and Indian Oceans are destined to supersede the inland waters of Europe as a battle-ground of international interests. The world-wide policy founded on these views brought Russia into closer contact with China and Japan. The strength of the former lay in her isolation; for, until Siberia was traversed by a railway, China was vulnerable only on the sea-coast. Japan, too, for long ages was hermetically sealed to foreign enterprise. In 1868 a revolution occurred whose workings are hardly within the grasp of Western intelligence. The aristocracy voluntarily surrendered their feudal rights; and a weak dual government of spiritual and temporal chiefs gave place to an empire of the latest European type. In half a generation Japan assimilated all the institutions and resources evolved in Old Europe by centuries of effort; and the growth of her military and naval strength brought with it a lust of dominion. The Korean peninsula, which commands the approaches to Peking, became the object of Japanese intrigues, which aroused intense jealousy in the Mandarinate. The European Powers, alarmed at the prospect of injury to their commerce, offered mediation; and at their instance a treaty was executed between China and Japan on April 18, 1885, which left Korea under the latter's suzerainty. This settlement was soon infringed by the Koreans, who put forward claims to independence, established diplomatic relations with the European Powers, and in August 1888 entered into a commercial treaty with Russia. These pretensions excited strong feeling in China and Japan; and the troops of both intervened in turn, keeping the peninsula in constant turmoil. A crisis came in June 1894, when Japan demanded the execution of the treaty of 1885 and extensive reforms in the administration, enforcing her claims by invading Korea. China took up arms against the intruders, and war ensued. The unwieldy Empire, wedded as it is to a

dead and buried past, was no match for its island foes. In seven months the Chinese fleet was utterly destroyed and southern Manchuria was overrun by the Japanese. China was compelled to sue for peace. It was granted by the Treaty of Shimonoseki (April 17, 1895) under which the conquerors acquired Korea and Liao-Tung peninsula, including Port Arthur and Talien-wan, the Pescadores, and the great island of Formosa. Four Manchurian ports were opened to the commerce of all nations; but the Japanese obtained exclusive commercial advantages in the interior.

The speedy collapse of China took Russia by surprise. She was unable to witness unmoved the rise of a great naval Power in regions which were marked out as within her own orbit. Vladivostok is ice-bound during the winter months; and Russian eyes were fixed on Port Arthur, a splendid harbour which is open throughout the year.

The Tsar sought support from France and Germany. Though the former's interests were confined to southern China, the terms of the Franco-Russian alliance left her no choice but to adopt concerted action. The Kaiser's designs in Constantinople, Asia Minor, and the Persian Gulf led him to embrace the Russian proposals with ardour. On April 22, 1895, the ambassadors of the three Powers presented a joint protest against any annexations in Continental China. Japan was worn out by the fierce contest from which she had emerged; and finding no countenance from Great Britain, she yielded to the pressure. History repeated itself. Just as, in 1878, the Western Powers combined to deprive Russia of the spoils of conquest, so on May 5, 1895, Russia joined France and Germany in extorting from Japan a treaty by which that Power abandoned her claims on the Liao-Tung peninsula.

The confederates who had saved China from dismemberment reaped a rich reward. France obtained additional territory and privileges on the frontier of Tonquin; Germany secured a foothold at Tien-tsin and Hankow, a commercial

centre on the Yellow River which had hitherto been considered as falling within the British sphere of influence. Russia was less eager in advancing her claims to Chinese gratitude, but she lost nothing by delay. Her first step was to sign a convention in June 1895 by which the Ministry at Peking contracted a loan of £16,000,000 from the newly-formed Russo-Chinese Bank of St Petersburg. In December 1896, and June 1898, further conventions received the Tsar's sanction, under which the Eastern China Railway Company obtained leave to carry a branch of the Trans-Siberian line through Manchuria to the sea. This convention, which was for a term of 80 years, conferred exclusive mineral rights in that vast province on the new company, and gave Russia a faculty of maintaining garrisons there for the protection of the railway line.

A new phase opened on November 14, 1897, when Germany swooped down on Kiao-Chau, a landlocked bay which, like Port Arthur and Wei-Hai-Wei, commands the approaches by sea to Peking. The excuse for these aggressive proceedings was the murder of two German missionaries. No protest was lodged by the British Foreign Office, which was induced to believe that Russia was a consenting party. In January 1898 the Kaiser obtained a 99 years' lease of this splendid naval base, and an acknowledgement that the whole province of Shan-Tung was part and parcel of his sphere of influence. The convention of December 1896 authorised Russia to station warships at the ports on the Liao-Tung seaboard; and on December 18, 1897, a squadron took possession of Port Arthur, ostensibly as a winter rendezvous for the Pacific fleet. German aggression had precipitated a step which might have been long delayed. On March 3, 1898, Russia demanded from China a lease for 99 years of Port Arthur and Talien-wan, and obtained one for 25 years. On March 28 the Chinese garrisons were withdrawn and Russia occupied both ports. Talien-wan, under its new name of Dalny, will be a terminus of the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Not to be outdone in the scramble for the spoils of China, England in her turn secured a lease of Wei-Hai-Wei, at the entrance of the Gulf of Pechili (April 4, 1898). A secret agreement with Germany, which deprived the lessees of commercial rights in the Shan-Tung hinterland, rendered this acquisition of no practical value. It has since been virtually abandoned by England.

These successive losses of territory excited keen apprehension throughout China, and increased the hatred felt by the masses for their Manchu rulers. The youthful Emperor Kwang-su was in sympathy with a reforming party, which aimed at a reconstruction of the ancient institutions of China according to the latest European lights. In September 1898 the conservative section, headed by Kwang-su's aunt, the Dowager-Empress Tsze-chi, effected a *coup d'état*. The Emperor was closely imprisoned in his palace and compelled to sign an edict transferring all power to the masterful princess. The premature movement of reform was speedily crushed, and many of its leaders were executed. This réaction against intruding influences was not long in bearing fruit. An overweening contempt of all things foreign characterises the Mandarinate, an educated class which has a monopoly of public employ; and this inveterate prejudice was enhanced by the greed displayed by European adventurers; for the spoliation of China by the Western Powers attracted a horde of promoters to Peking, who clamoured for permission to mine and to construct railways. Their claims were urged with pertinacity by the ministers accredited to the Chinese court; and the resulting discord gave a finishing stroke to European prestige. The keenest among the rivals made an attempt to limit the area of friction. On April 20, 1899, an agreement was signed by Russia and Great Britain, under which the latter undertook to restrain her subjects from seeking to construct railways north of the Great Wall; the former consenting not to oppose the grant of concessions to Englishmen in the Yang-tse-Kiang valley.

A truce was called to this degrading competition by the appearance of a common foe. At the end of May 1899 one of the secret societies with which China is honeycombed, styling itself the Boxers, rose against the detested foreigners. With tacit encouragement from the Dowager-Empress, the rebels massacred European missionaries and traders in the interior, bombarded the settlements at Tien-tsin, and laid siege to the legations at Peking. All European countries possessing commercial interests in China were compelled to sink their mutual jealousies. A concert was established, which was joined by the United States and Japan. On June 7 the Taku forts, commanding access to Tien-tsin, were demolished by a combined squadron; and on June 23 the European residents of that port were released from a most perilous position. A small British force pushed forward gallantly to the rescue of the beleaguered legations, but on June 29 it was compelled to retrace its steps. On August 15, however, the imprisoned garrisons at Peking were relieved by an allied force. With the exception of the German Minister, who had been murdered in the streets, no diplomatic representative had suffered harm.

This general revolt against the foreign incubus spread to Manchuria. Russia had a small Cossack garrison at Blagoveschenk on the Amur, commanding the steamer-route between the railway stations of Stretensk and Khabarovsk. At the end of July 1900 a Chinese mob sallied forth from Aigun, a walled city on the opposite bank, and poured volleys of musketry into Blagoveschenk. The Cossacks were seized with panic; and, perceiving tokens of sympathy with the rising in the Chinese population, they surrounded the bazars with an armed force. The defenceless inhabitants were dragged forth in batches and driven into the Amur: 4000 traders and coolies thus met their death, and the broad current was covered with their corpses. Then, with the aid of strong reinforcements hurried eastwards by railway, the Russians

delivered an attack upon Aigun. Its defenders were put to the sword, and the city was reduced to a heap of ruins. These terrible examples crushed the spirit of rebellion in Manchuria : but sinister memories will cling to Blagoveschenk for many years to come.

Having rescued their representatives from slaughter or bondage, the Powers undertook the task of pacifying China. In order to avoid a chaos of divided councils they entrusted the supreme command of their contingents to Count von Waldersee, a German officer with long experience of warfare. His appointment was settled by the Tsar and Kaiser Wilhelm; but it was not due to the former's initiative, as the German Foreign Office pretended. Short work was made of the Boxer rebellion, which ebbed out after the capture of the Pei-tang forts by an allied army.

With the return of the puppet Emperor to Peking, whence he had fled on the invaders' approach, a discreditable chapter in the history of European intercourse with China came to a close. That distant Empire has succeeded to the position held by Turkey a quarter of a century back. Every Power professes to respect its independence and integrity; while each is ready to cast justice and moderation to the winds when an appeal is made to the instinct of self-aggrandisement. Concerted action is not to be looked for in the future; and all the elements of an Armageddon exist in the far-East.

Happily for the interests of peace, Russia's immense forces are swayed by a Sovereign who holds "the last resort of kings" in abhorrence. On August 24, 1898, while war-clouds were gathering in the horizon of China, the world was startled by the appearance of a circular under the hand of Count Muraviev, then Foreign Minister, which proposed a cessation of the international rivalry displayed in ever-increasing expenditure on armaments. This remarkable state-paper declared that "military and naval budgets attack public prosperity at

its very source, and divert national energies from useful aims." It adverted to the commercial crises provoked by this waste of power, and to the constant danger arising from the accumulation of war-material. In a peroration which eloquently alluded to the armed peace of our days as a crushing burden, "menacing a cataclysm whose horrors cause every heart to tremble with anticipation," the circular suggested that the burning question should be discussed by a conference.

The conception of an international tribunal to supersede the arbitrament of the sword was no novelty. It had engaged the attention of theoretical jurists for three centuries; but no writer had propounded any efficient method of giving effect to the decrees of a European Areopagus. In 1814 the subject was long and anxiously debated at the Vienna Congress; and Alexander I was foremost among the champions of a Court of Arbitration. Despite his advocacy, the delegates separated without arriving at a decision. In April 1874, again, Alexander II promoted a conference which assembled at Brussels and attempted to codify the usages of war. Thus the theories broached by the young Tsar were based on opinions held by his enlightened predecessors. They were in logical sequence to his father's policy, and appealed with force to his own generous impulses.

The circular was hailed by Europe and the United States as a proof of its originator's humanity, but grave differences of opinion arose as to its practical application. England's army is on an insignificant scale as compared with those maintained by the great military monarchies; but her existence as the centre of a world-shadowing Empire is bound up in the retention of sea-power. Public opinion was decidedly averse from any reduction in the numbers and efficiency of the British fleet. Alsace and Lorraine, the spoils of 1871, stand between France and Germany. These Powers exercise mutual vigilance, and vie with each other in developing the means of resistance.

Moreover, an influential school in central Europe and the United States believed warfare to be essential to human progress. They pointed to the imposing edifices of American and German unity, whose foundations were cemented by blood. They laid stress on the deterioration seen in a nation's energies during a peace too long preserved, and on the public virtues which flourish in the storm and stress of battle.

Nothing daunted by the divergence of opinion excited by his first attempt, the Tsar sketched the programme of his projected conference in another circular dated January 11, 1899. Every State in the world, except the Republics of South America and Africa, was invited to participate. Twenty-six of the leading Powers complied; and the Hague was accepted by all as the meeting-place. Russia was represented by M. George de Staal, her ambassador in London, and by F. Martens and A. Raffalovich, both jurists of the highest distinction. Great Britain's mouthpiece was Lord Pauncefoot, her representative at Washington. At the first session of the conference, on May 18, 1899, M. de Staal was unanimously appointed President. A better choice could not have been made. The world is indebted to his tact and long experience of affairs for the measure of success which crowned this delicate enterprise. In order to facilitate the despatch of business the conference resolved itself into three committees, which dealt with the method of limiting armaments and the use of needlessly destructive engines in warfare; with the extension of the principles agreed to at Geneva in 1864 and at Brussels ten years later; and with international diplomacy and arbitration. The task of the first committee proved the most difficult of all. Germany was the chief opponent of the Russian programme, for one of her delegates belonged to the section which regards war as a necessary agent in evolving civilisation. Another demurred to the assertion that his country was crushed by imposts, and he was supported by his colleague representing Austria-Hungary. Thus the conference was content to affirm



that it was highly desirable to limit the charge entailed by armaments. The Russians advocated restrictions on the calibre and initial velocity of cannon and small arms, and on the thickness of armour on men-of-war. They urged that submarine vessels, ramming by iron-clads, explosive bullets, and asphyxiating shells should be prohibited. No agreement was arrived at except as regards the last ; but an interdict was laid for five years on the employment of balloons to discharge explosive substances.

The second committee was more fruitful in achievement. It neutralised vessels equipped solely to save human life, and permitted them to take up positions favourable for their mission, provided that they should not interfere with the movements of combatants. Shipwrecked and wounded men brought into a neutral port were to be restrained from taking part in further operations. On the other hand England successfully opposed the application to naval warfare of the clauses of the Brussels protocol tending to protect open towns, private property, and telegraphic lines. In the third committee a proposal was submitted by the Russian delegates to establish a permanent Court of Arbitration for deciding international disputes. It was warmly combated by Germany ; but the following principles received the Conference's approval.—When a conflict seems imminent one or several Powers shall have the right of offering mediation ; and its exercise shall not be regarded as an “unfriendly act.” A permanent Court of Arbitration was established at the Hague, to be composed of judges selected from a list on which every State is represented. This body forms an International Council with a standing bureau and commissions of enquiry, charged with the task of preparing matter for future decrees. On July 25, 1899, the delegates of 16 States signed a protocol embodying the decisions arrived at ; and it was subsequently executed by sixteen more, including Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, Italy, China, and Japan.

Though the Tsar's noble designs were not realised in their entirety, the Peace Conference was not devoid of solid results. They were a step, and a long step, towards the attainment of the ideal which contemplates an age when nations shall concentrate their energy on the arts of peace. The net outcome was admirably stated by the representative of France, who wrote, "This text certainly imposes none of those obligations which are devoid of sanction, and are shown by history to have been eluded or broken. But it sets forth an engagement which is calculated to be firm and durable for very different reasons—a purely moral engagement, but one which has been ratified in the sight of the civilised world, and is, therefore, the less likely to be set aside." The Conference of the Hague advanced the true interests of our race, and the coming of an hour when brute force shall yield to right and justice. A century of Russian history which dawned in bloodshed closed with a determined effort to give the blessings of peace to a distracted world.

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